

# ハンドレッド

3

赤き女王と囚われの荊姫

Hundred: Red Queen & Princess of Thorn

[hundred]

Misaki Jun

箕崎 准

大熊猫介 (ニトロプラス)  
Illustration

Hundred

vol.3: Red Queen and Princess of Thorn

by Jun Misaki

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③

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大熊猫介 (ニトロプラス)







クロヴァン

ハンドレッドを狙う密猟者。  
三人組のリーダー。

ジュダール・ハーヴェイ

クレアの兄。ワルスラン社の  
実質的な支配者。

ネザット

密猟者。  
クロヴァンの実の姉。

ナクリー

密猟者三人組の妹分。

クレア・ハーヴェイ

リドルガーデンを束ねる  
生徒会長。

クラウディア

エミールと同僚の幼なじみ。  
ブリタニア統合軍所属。

フリッツ・グランツ

レイティアの幼なじみ。軽い。

霧島サクラ

世界的な人気を誇る歌姫。

如月ハヤト

本作品の主人公。  
歴代一位のハンドレッド  
反応数値を誇る。

エミール・クロスフォード

可愛すぎる(?)ハヤトの同級生。

レイティア・サンデミリオン

武芸家一年。  
選抜隊入りを望んでいる。

HUNDRED





「ごめんなさい、  
少し焦ってしまって……」

顔をあげるクレア。  
二人は、吐息どころか、  
心臓の音すらも聞こえてしまいそうな  
距離まで接近していた。  
濡れた髪からは、色香を伴った淫靡な  
香りが漂い、鼻腔に流れ込んでくる。

「か、会長——!?!」







「いきますわよッ!」

「いっけええええええええええええええええッ!」





「うおおおおおお」

砲撃開始――

手にした《飛燕》にエナジーを籠めると、  
刃が赤く輝き、炎のようにオーラが立ちのぼる。  
狙うのはもちろん、飛龍型(ドラゴンタイプ)だ。

# Prologue

She wanted a little sister. She also said that to her mother, Linis Harvey. So, when her little sister was born, Claire was really happy. It was also Claire who named her little sister as Liza.

The two of them were always together. Anyone could see that they were very close sisters.

Their mother, Linis Harvey, had almost no time when Liza was being born. The cause of her death is [Deterioration of physical functions by«an unknown new virus»].

Several fragments of meteorite fell on the earth, and since the *First Attack*, humankind got in contact with an unknown life-form called Savage. it's one of the new types of diseases that is mostly found in young people, and even now, a decade later, no medical treatment has been established.

Originally, Linis had a weak constitution and was a child who repeatedly went in and out of the hospital.

Nevertheless, she was born with a unique brain and received a thorough special education for gifted children from an early age because of her father's intention to succeed in the financial district of Liberia, and as a result of that, she entered the medical faculty department of Halvard University which is the highest institute of education of Liberia.

She immersed herself in the research of various diseases and made many achievements.

While continuing her research at the university after graduation, Linis got acquainted with the young president of Warslan Company, Bill Harvey, who had funded the industry-university collaboration project in the field of medical supplies.

Before long, she gave birth to a boy and two girls.

When thinking about it, that time may have been the most brilliant in her life.

Immediately after that, the *First Attack* occurred, she got infected with a disease caused by the new type of virus, and couldn't continue to do research with normality.

Still, Linis gave birth to a girl to respond to the voice of Claire who wanted a little sister, and to save this world.

Until the moment of her death, at the laboratory of Warslan Company operated by her husband, she continued to devote herself to the research of new armament weapons——the Hundred.

When asked why she's going that far, Linis always answered this.

– It's all for the sake of winning the fight against God.

Claire knew about the research results of her mother after Linis passed away.

Linis made the strongest Slayer of mankind, Liza Harvey, and because of her, several countries and regions were saved from the evil hands of the Savage.



# Chapter 1: Sea *Judal* The Imprisoned Thorn Princess

– It’s the seeeeeeeeeeea——!

Latia Saint-Émillion, one of the Slayers belonging to Little Garden, runs into the beautiful ocean painted from a gradation of blue to green, dashing vigorously to the side of Emile, Fritz and Hayato who were spread on the beach seats under the parasols that were opened and installed in advance on the sandy beach.

Of course, she was wearing a swimsuit since she was at the sandy beach. It was an orange *separate* type that nicely represented her liveliness.

Today is the first Sunday of July.

Little Garden is sailing near the Ryukyu\*, the southernmost tip of the Yamato Empire near the tropics.

**\*TN: chain of southwestern Japanese islands comprising Okinawa Prefecture.**

And because of the sunny weather with no clouds and the best calmed ocean, Hayato along with Fritz Grantz and Emile Crossford, his classmates of the martial arts department who live in the same dorm, together with his little sister Kisaragi Karen and the hospital nurse in charge of her, Kashiwagi Mihal and last but not least Kirishima Sakura who’s visiting Little Garden in the middle of her days off, are behind the martial arts school building, and were visiting the beach of exclusive use for the students of the martial arts department.

– Thank you for waiting, Hayato-kun♪.

It’s Kirishima Sakura who just changed clothes to a pink bikini in the locker room and spoke to Hayato who just finished installing the parasol.

Ever since the incident on the Zwei Islands where Hayato was serving as her bodyguard, she, who’s a popular Idol worldwide, has been visiting Little Garden like this during her days off and now she’s spending them at the same time as

Hayato and the others.

– Hey, what do you think of this swimsuit, Hayato-kun?

Sakura put one hand on the waist and the other hand on the back of the head, taking a provocative pose like a *gravure idol*.

The long pigtails of her hair sway gently.

In reality, it was very close for this to look like a gravure work, her proportions are pretty good.

Her waist is quite tightened, although it can't be said that the moderate bulges that claim their existence are big.

The curve of her buttocks that swell from there are full of small devilish charm, and are very lascivious.

Or rather, they have a lot of exposure.

– ... Umm, I think it suits you.

– Yay♪.

Sakura is saying so with a stimulated voice, and makes a V sign with her fingers.

By the way, Hayato was stubbornly saying to Sakura to not address him without using an honorific in front of other people, so she calls him with a 『-kun』

Not only strange rumors will rise if they address without using an honorific, but also the possibility of misunderstandings and being interrogated will be high.

Even if it's 『-kun』, that's still no good.

– Nii-san, what do you think of Karen's swimsuit?

The next who opened her mouth is a girl with a fairly white skin and black long hair named Kisaragi Karen, the little sister of Hayato, who's on the wheelchair pushed by Kashiwagi Mihal, the nurse in charge of her.

The swimsuit of Mihal is a flower pattern dress type, it's quiet and plain, giving a sense of cleanliness, and Karen was wearing a school swimsuit.

– It totally suits you. You really look like a “yamatonadeshiko”.

**\*TN: A woman who displays the feminine virtues of old japan.**

– Ehehe, you think so? I went together with Mihal to buy it yesterday. That means that the time we spent together for what we chose was fruitful.

Saying that happily, Hayato thinks that this could have been a real nuisance to Mihal-san. Shopping isn't a category of the work of a nurse.

– I'm sorry, Mihal-san., Karen seems to have bothered you.

Hayato apologized and felt guilty as her older brother.

Mihal received that smiling,

– No no, it wasn't a bother at all. Don't worry about it. I just thought of giving it a try and buy this year's swimsuit.

– Oh, I think that it matches you, that swimsuit.

– Oh my, thank you very much♪I can't put on something with a lot of exposure like Sakura-san.

She's telling him that being humble, but there's no need to be like that.

Her skin also has youthfulness, and his line of sight gets strongly attracted towards the melon-like bulges of her chest.

At any rate, every time Mihal moves, they shake, boasting their considerable presence.

– Hey! Looking nothing but her boobs, you womanizer...

She probably noticed that the eyes of Hayato are watching the breasts of Mihal.

Sakura glares at Hayato, and pouts her lips.

– Oh my, are you interested in the breasts of an Oba-san\* like me?

**\*TN: Old lady, ma'am, aunt.**



Mihal emphasized her chest while showing a smile on her face, making sure to grab her left arm with her right arm.

\*Munyuu\*, the breasts change their form above the arms.

They look very soft.

There's no doubt he is interested in them and wants to touch them, but of course this is not a situation where he can say such a thing.

— Urr, no that's not —

Though he thought he was rude to Mihal-san, Hayato attempts to deny that with his mouth and,

— Indecent Nii-san.

— Pervert Hayato.

Not only from Karen, but also from his classmate Emile Crossford, the student of the same martial arts department of Little Garden, and who's also his childhood friend, he ended up receiving their glares as if they were piercing him.

Looking at their figures, Mihal had an enjoyably smile on her face.

(Maybe Mihal-san was also bantering with me?)

Hayato shrugged his shoulders.

By the way, among the chest of the five people in this place: Emile Crossford aka Emilia Hermit, Kirishima Sakura, Kisaragi Karen, Kashiwagi Mihal and Latia Saint-Émillion, Kashiwagi Mihal's breasts are the biggest. The second place goes to Emilia. But she has no bulges now, the reason is that she's acting like a man —as Emile Crossford. She's wearing the usual swimsuit for a man, together with a T-shirt on the upper body. Since, as expected, beneath that, there's a sarashi\*.

\*TN: long strip of cloth, usually thick cotton, wrapped tightly around the midriff up to the chest. Source: TV Tropes.

— Hey, Hayato, Fritz! Come over here quickly! You can see beautiful fish in the water! And they seem to be tropical fish!

Latia was waving her hands inside the sea. Before they became aware of it, she was underwater with a snorkel and goggles, and even with water flippers on her feet.

Looking at that figure, Karen showed an expression of jealousy.

– Latia-san, you are very energetic. Karen also wants to go to the sea.

– If so, can she go? Is it fine, Mihal-san?

Sakura wants the consent of Mihal.

– Yes, it's fine. But, don't push yourself. If you think it's too much, please call me right away. Don't go to a deep place or where the waves are strong because you want to see beautiful fishes and corals, okay?

– Yes, I know all of that, so I will be fine.

Answering, Karen tries to stand up from the wheelchair.

– Wait, I'll lend you a shoulder.

Since their reunion back in the Zwei Islands, Sakura and Karen's relationship has deepened quite a lot.

The time Karen and Sakura spent together is longer than the time Hayato has spent with Sakura or Karen.

– It's really a relief to have Sakura-san. Maybe it wasn't necessary for me to come.

Mihal smiled, watching the close friendship of Sakura and Karen.

– That's not true. If something happens, we will be in trouble if Mihal-san isn't present.

Hayato defends Mihal.

It was also a superb thing for Hayato since he could see the swimsuit of Mihal that he didn't expect to see.

– We would be nothing without you\*.

**\*TN: This line was written like this: we are nothing, but you are the number one/best.**

Mihal smiles gracefully.

There, a voice called him out.

– Hey, Hayato-kun, hurry up!

– Nii-san, come here, quickly! The water is transparent and you can see lots of fish!

He was called by Karen and Sakura who are submerged in the seawater till their knees already.

– Got it, I'll go immediately.

Answering in a loud voice, he turns towards Mihal.

– Well then, I'll be going too.

Hayato then turned his eyes to Emile.

– What are you going to do, Emile?

– I'll stay here. Because I don't like the sea.

Emile became sulky and pouted her lips.

By the way, Hayato knows that it's a lie that she doesn't like the sea. Actually, she also wanted to swim in the ocean with all her heart.

However, in a swimsuit it's difficult to swim after hiding the line of the body, so Emile is going to endure it, as she was saying so last night. In that case, he thought that it would be better if she didn't come but,

– That won't do. I'll definitely go. Because Kirishima Sakura will go, right?

So, she came to the beach like this.

– Okay, then I'll be going.

He takes off his coat and walks towards Karen and Sakura, wearing his swimsuit.

– Sorry for the wait.

When approaching them and calling them out,

– How long has it been since I came to the sea with Nii-san like this?



And, Karen muttered while looking at the sparkling light reflected on the sea surface.

– Because we came back to Yamato almost immediately, I guess that it was around a decade ago...

After that, due to the appearance of symptoms of the illness of Karen, it turned considerably hard to go to the sea.

– Look, Nii-san.

Karen scoops up water with both hands, throwing it to the face of Hayato.

– Uwaa, what are you doing so suddenly!?

Hayato splashes water on her in the same way.

– Wapuh!\*

**\*TN: Don't ask me how to translate this SFX, I'm not an English speaker.**

It hits splendidly the face of Karen, but she doesn't hate that behavior.

On the contrary, she looked happy.

– Ehehe, the water here is very beautiful, but as expected, the saltiness doesn't change, isn't it?

Karen sticks out her tongue and gives it a taste.

Looking at that figure, Hayato was glad that he brought Karen to this place, he thought that from the bottom of his heart.

– Nii-san, this is revenge.

– Uwaa!

Karen has her revenge, splashing water on him this time.

– Would you like me to help, Karen-chan?

Somehow or other, Sakura seems to be on Karen's side.

– Come come, Hayato-kun!

– Nii-san, from here too... eh, kyaa!

Although Karen approached the side of Hayato and tried to scoop water, she tripped up due to a strong wave, losing the balance of her body.

– Karen-chan!

Sakura raised a scream.

Hayato hurriedly reached for Karen who was on the side and grabbed her.

(Phew, I made it somehow...)

He was able to grab the arms of Karen and was able to embrace the slender body of hers.

– Are you okay? We said to not be imprudent, right?

– Ah, that, I'm sorry.... Karen got a bit carried away.... I'm going to reflect on that.

Karen says her words of apologies while keeping her forehead on the warm chest of Hayato.

– I'm glad that Karen-chan is safe but, Hayato-kun, how long are you going to be like that with Karen-chan? You look like a pair of lovers.

– Eh...?

He noticed when being told so. It's just as she said. Likewise, Karen seemed to have noticed it when she said so.

– Kyaah!

Giving a small scream, she separated from Hayato.

Her face is dyed red and her breathing became rough.

– ... Karen, are you okay?

– Ah, yes... and it's nothing like that.

– “It's nothing like that”...?

– That's something of no concern to Nii-san!

He didn't understand it well, but anyway, she was probably thinking that she was glad that he was fine.

From then on, Karen continued playing with Sakura, splashing water on each other, and picking up seashells and calcified corals.



Then they get to where Latia is, who's catching fish underwater with a



harpoon that she brought from somewhere.

On that side, Fritz was floating on the surface of the sea facing up, and muttered while looking up at the sky.

– It's so peaceful.

Hayato thinks the same.

It would be great if a time like this could last forever— —and.

– I wonder if you are becoming hungry now?

When around an hour has passed since they started playing in the sea, Sakura began to talk.

– Yes, it's been a while since I moved a lot, so Karen is also very hungry.

Karen holds her stomach as she's saying that.

– Hayato-kun, were you hungry too?

Aside from swimming, only by walking in the sea makes you burn a lot of calories.

– I guess I'm also quite hungry.

– I see, if that's the case, then I should prepare lunch.

Saying so, Sakura tries to return to the sheet.

– Should I help too?

Next, Mihal tried to follow after Sakura but,

– No, I can do it myself. Everyone return in 5 minutes or so to the sheet.

Hayato-kun, can you go and tell Latia-san and Fritz-san too?

– O-of course, I'll do it.



– Why did you come back?

Emile who had been lying down her back on the deck chair, raises her body in response to Sakura who returned to the beach sheet and asks her a question.

– To prepare lunch.

Answered Sakura.

– I was making some sandwiches for Hayato since the morning. Of course, there are for you and everyone too.

– Sandwiches?

– Yea, sandwiches. The kitchen in the hotel room is narrow so I can't cook very well, but I think we are okay with these.

– Hmmm, even though you are an Idol, you can cook.

– ... what? Is it so strange for an Idol to prepare dishes?

– That's because I thought that the people around you would do that.

– What's that? I'm not a spoiled girl. I usually eat outside a lot, but there are things that I do by myself too. Besides, an old friend of mine told me something. If you don't want to let go of a man, you have to go after him with home cooking. Of course, I prepared these pouring them a lot of LOVE.

– Love, huh...

Emile had a fed-up expression on her face, looking at Sakura who's making a heart symbol with the fingers of both hands.

– ... the hell is that reaction?

– No, it's nothing.

\*Humph\*, Emile turns her face away from the glaring Sakura.

– Well, I don't care. And since Hayato hasn't come back yet, I have something that I want to ask you.

– You want to ask something? And why all of a sudden?

The air flowing between those two is turbulent.

Hayato had to take time to call Fritz and Latia who are located far away from the shore.

– What's your relationship with Hayato?

The moment she heard those words, the heart of Emile jumped.

– M-my relationship with Hayato, you say? What do you...

Recently, she was too accustomed to not being exposed that she was a man, that maybe she has been slackening her alertness a little.

Sakura's conjectures are very good in some respects, maybe because she lives in a world of show business of sly old dogs.

Perhaps, she saw *that*?

Or she noticed *that*?

A lot of things came to her mind.

– Well, it's rumored among some female students that the bonding between you and Hayato is to the level where you are flirting here and there and that looks somewhat suspicious.

– Oh, it's that kind of thing.

Emile sighed profoundly.

She's gotten used to answering that every time she hears similar things.

– Hayato and I are close to each other because we met in Gudenburg a long time ago. Besides, we were in the same room until we joined *Selections*.

Emile answered, touching her chest bragging about the time she had with Hayato alone, and understood that Sakura just thought of her as a hindrance to herself.

Although both things lasted for a short time, reality says that they were true.

– ... eh, you are also a childhood friend of Hayato?

When she saw Sakura who was completely surprised, Emile had the feeling of "got you!"

– I also heard of you from Hayato. But, you met him for a single day only— by the way, I spent every day with Hayato for about a month, so it's natural for me to be the one closest to him. We are true childhood friends.

– Yeah but it's not a matter of time—

– Since she was born, Karen has always been together with Nii-san. So,

perhaps that makes of Karen his number one childhood friend, isn't it?

The one who cut into the conversation between Emile and Sakura was Karen, who smiled like an angel, without evil intentions.

Behind her, Hayato, Latia, Fritz and Mihal can be seen.

– Well...

– Err...

Emile and Sakura were unable to go against her as expected, and they were only able to withdraw speaking ambiguously to each other.



After lunch, when the sun rose high, a lot of Hayato's classmates and senior classes of martial arts department gathered at the beach.

Naturally, Sakura is drawing the attention, but it's not on the level that can be compared with Central.

The true character of Sakura is already—they know that she's not Kirishima Sakura, the image of purity and gracefulness that is known on TV and the *net*, but the Sakura who's constantly speaking in a positive way about anything she has an interest of, who's bothersome and selfish when deprecated, that she's humane—no, they already know that her character is the one of a Slayer.

Far from loosening her cool with only that, Sakura was completely opening her heart.

With girls who are also Slayers, and surrounded by male students, she was playing in a watermelon splitting game.

– Hey, Hayato. Why don't we do that thing next?

– By that you mean the splitting?

– No, that, that.

Looking at where the gaze of Latia is pointing to, students of the martial arts department were playing a 2 vs 2 beach volleyball.



– Although I was able to make up for my loss of the sham battle in the last competition, I ended up losing to Emile. So, let's have a rematch with a 2 vs 2 match.

– Alright, if that's what you want.

It was Emile and not Hayato who answered gallantly and showed an attitude of joining the match.

She rises from the sheet with energy.

Perhaps she's thinking of blowing away the frustration about not being able to enter the sea till now.

– Hayato, you'll do it too, right?

– Okay, I'll be your teammate.

It can't be helped if it has become to this. Hayato decided to accept the match and join them in order to release tension.

– Nii-san, Emile-san, please do your best!

– You can do it, Hayato-kun!

Hayato enters the emptied court while receiving the cheering of Karen and Sakura who held a watermelon in her hands.

Latia and Fritz have already entered the other side of the net that was set in the middle, and they were doing warm-up exercises.

– Is it fine if we set the victory of the match by winning 10 points? However, in the case we are tied with 9 points, I guess that the team who earns two points consecutively will win.

Like the term “deuce” in tennis, and coming to the side of the net, Latia starts explaining.

Speaking of the rules, the team who gets a point gets the next right to serve, so if you keep scoring, then you can keep holding the right to serve all the time.

Of course, these aren't formal beach volley rules.

It's something special for this place only.

– I don't have nothing to say about the rules so.... What about you Hayato?  
Are you fine with them?

– Yeah, since I don't remember the official rules.

– The last thing is... oh right. How should we decide who's going first and second?

Latia responds immediately to the question of Emile.

– Rock, paper, scissors game is fine, I guess?

– If so, then let's go with that. Hayato, can I play the janken\*?

**\*TN: The name of the game but in Japanese.**

– Yeah, go ahead.

– Then, is this okay for me?

Fritz replies, turning his eyes to Latia.

– Do as you like.

– Well then, janken——

Following the voice of Latia, 「PON!」the voices of the two overlapped.

Latia has rock, Emile has scissors.

It's the team of Latia and Fritz that got the right to serve.

– ... Sorry, Hayato.

– Don't worry. Janken is all about luck.

Hayato called out Emile to comfort her, who's coming back next to him with a dispirited look.

– I appreciate what you are saying to me. Let's do our best.

– Yeah.

Immediately after Hayato answered.

– Then let's begin the match. Here I go!

Latia moved to the inner part of the end line and threw the ball high to the sky and released a jumping serve.

Together with a tempestuous impact, the ball pierces the court.

– Amazing, Latia-san...!

Karen looks at the ball buried in the sand with her eyes blinking in surprise. Next to her, Sakura muttered as if she was amazed.

– More than amazing, it's overkill, right...?

– By any chance, are you an experienced volleyball player?

– Nope, I have no experience.

Hayato's question is answered by Latia.

– Because of this height, I have spent a life unrelated to basketball and volleyball. It's my first time doing it. I learned by watching others, but it seems that I did better than I thought.

– Or rather, Latia used *sense energy*, right? Otherwise, you couldn't jump so high, or be able to hit a nimble serve.

Emilia talks with a discontented look.

– Yeah but, is it that bad? There's no rule that prohibits the use of *energy*.

The use of *energy* is prohibited in the ball games of the physical education lessons.

But Latia wants to say that it's not like that now.

– But isn't banned the use of *energy* outside the arranged places in Little Garden?

– This is one of those places, you know.

Hayato interjects with the thought that the President could get angry, and answered with an amazed expression to Latia who was saying so.

So, 「Oh, I see」and Hayato remembered. Outside training is sometimes done at the exclusive beach of the Slayers. In other words, this beach allows the use of both *energy* and the Hundred.

Nonetheless, of course, it's forbidden to use *energy* in a thoughtless way but —「If so, then it's fine if we start using *energy* like this?」

– If you want.

Both Latia and Emilia look like they are motivated to do it with *energy*.

– What about you?

When Hayato turned his eyes, Fritz turned his hands to the air, saying “yareyare”

It can't be helped. It's a gesture that says “let them do as they like”.

Hayato sighed greatly.

It seems like there's no choice but to compete with *energy*.

– Well then, here I go again!

The game restarts with the serve of Latia.

Latia jumped to the ball that was raised high again to the sky and swung downward her arm with all her strength using *energy*.

– .....!

Hayato rapidly took position of receiver, hitting the ball with the momentum of an arrow.

(What is this....)

The ball was heavier than he imagined.

It feels like lead.

It's rotating on top of the joined hands.

– Hayato, use *energy* to send the ball flying!

– Got it!

Doing as he was told, Hayato sent the ball flying somehow, and the ball crossed over the net, it went across the opponent's court.

The falling point is above Fritz's head.

– Fritz, raise the ball!

– Gotcha!

Fritz tosses the falling ball as instructed by Latia.

– Perfect, as expected of Fritz!

Latia rushed to the position of the ball that went up high at the edge of the net and jumped high, then tried to hit it with her arm that was cladded in *sense energy*.

She's aiming at Hayato.

– Hayato, control the *energy* skillfully and neutralize the momentum of the ball. With that, you'll be able to catch it.

– ... okay, I'll try it.

In other words, she thought that he should use *energy* like a cushion and take the position of receiver.

However,

PAAAAAAAAAAAAA...!

The moment his right hand cladded in *energy* touched the ball, a violent plosive sound resounded in the beach.

– Fugyaa!!

He guessed that the strength conveyed from her arm was too strong.

When Latia hit it, the ball exploded.

Latia, who was surprised by the sound and the strong shock that she didn't anticipate, falls on the sand as she is, hitting her head, her eyes go round and round.

– Hey, are you okay?

Immediately after Fritz called out Latia, an exasperated voice echoed at the coast.

– ... what are you guys doing masuno?

When they turned their eyes towards the voice, they were able to see the captain of Little Garden and her Student Council President— —Claire Harvey.



Behind her, they could also see the figures of the Vice presidents Liddy Steinberg and Erika Candle, along with Chris Steinbelt, the *main analyst* of Little Garden, who's also a middle school student.

Claire is accompanied by those three people and approach the location of Hayato and the others.

The four swimsuits are the same as those he saw back in Claire's vacation home when he stopped by in the Zwei Islands.

Claire has a red *separate* type, Liddy has a white dress type, Erika has a dark blue dress type and Chris wears a T-shirt and white shorts.

– The President also came to the beach...

The voice of Fritz, who grimaced when he saw that this was problematic, trembled in fear due to the anger that would fall after this.

– I think that even us have time to take a rest at the sea masu. And the house over there is mine desushine.

Saying that, Claire turned her eyes to a large two-storied building that is visible from the beach.

(To think that the big house that was near the school, is in fact, the house of the President...)

Hayato didn't know it until now.

– However, concerning the result, it looks like I ended up doing something like patrolling.

The glint in the eyes of Claire is instantly pointed towards Latia who's stretching at the beach.

– You guys, it is unreasonable to use *sense energy* and the Hundred within the school, don't you agree?

Liddy opened her mouth and gazed at each of the three members of *Selections* standing alongside Hayato.

– Well, there are only Slayers around here, we didn't break anything, and I think that all is fine.

Emile tries to mislead them laughing with a “Ahaha”, but of course the members of the Student Council don’t tolerate that.

– No excuses! The members of *Selections* must be existences that serve as a model for other students. If you do the same next time and don’t moderate your behavior — depending on the situation, we will confiscate your dedicated Hundred.

– Th-that’s a problem! When I finally became familiar with it!

Latia jumped up to her feet to respond to the words of Liddy.

– If you are troubled, then it’s time to make sure that you are going to be a proper model for other students.

– Indeed, and Kisaragi Hayato—. How is the training situation after the competition desuno?

– Umm, that...

Last month, a martial arts competition was held where all first-year members of the martial arts department with the exception of Sakura participated. His reaction value before enrolling was first place, and the degree of attention towards Kisaragi Hayato who enlisted in the in the special team commanded by the Student Council—*Selections* was naturally high, but speaking of results, he couldn’t live up to expectations. Following Emile, Latia and Fritz, he got fourth place among the first-years.

The reason that confirms so is that his results were dull.

It’s because he couldn’t go beyond a complete control of the power of the Variant.

And the fact that he has barely practiced suppressing the spontaneous discharge of the ability so far to not end up going rampage, and also that he had to obey the rules where he can’t go full armament nor put a *N barrier* when he’s in a pinch.

Apart from the battle against the Savage and if there’s a resistance now, in the battles where he wasn’t betting his life, like the sham battle against Fritz and Latia and the duel against the President, the ability of the Variant will not

be triggered almost automatically.

– From now on, you have to be able to activate the ability of the Variant by your own will and to be able to do full armament at any time masenwane.

After the competition, Claire issued those instructions to Hayato.

At that time, he remembered the girl with an eyepatch, who's one of the three *hunters* who had brown skin and met by chance in the Zwei Islands.

She created a Hundred that looked like Hayato's *Hien* and swung it downward to the core of the Savage.

With that, she couldn't destroy the core, but when she murmured 「Ability Unleashed」*Limit out*, her eyes shone in golden color, the sword was engulfed by swaying black energy and destroyed the core.

That was for sure the activation of the ability of the Variant.

Hayato has been training together with Emile in that matter, as well as doing full armament, but neither of them can be done skillfully by him.

– It appears that as long as I see that reaction, then you still have some ways to go desuwane.

Looking at Hayato's response, and immediately after that, Claire guessed his situation.

The light of the sun is blocked by a big shadow that was made in the sky.

– What's that...?

With Fritz's voice and the sound of the propellers reaching his ears, Hayato noticed that a helicopter appeared above Little Garden.

It's similar to the personal airplane of Claire that is in Little Garden, but there's one difference.

– That's the crest of Warslan Company, right?

As Fritz says, there's no doubt that the fuselage isn't of Little Garden, since what is painted is the crest of an eagle which is the symbol of Warslan Company.

– That's WL-02? Don't tell me that it's Judal... Onii-sama desuno?

– That “Onii-sama” means that, the president of Warslan Company came to Little Garden!?

It was Latia who gave a surprise voice.

Hayato and the others also understand the reason why.

Ever since they enrolled, the president of Warslan Company never visited Little Garden.

– It is definitely him. That fuselage is of the very same personal airplane of Judal-sama...

Erika replies to Latia.

– But, descending to the earth from Lunaltia Base without me noticing...

Claire muttered so, she was clearly upset.

– ... Lunaltia Base?

Hayato tilts his head.

– Lunaltia base is a lunar base that Warslan Company was developing in cooperation with the Liberian government before the *First Attack*.

Erika explains.

With the subsequently raids of the Savage, the space development between the United States of Liberia and Warslan Company was suspended.

However, a few years ago, it was said that development was resumed at the same time that Bill Harvey, the father of Claire, who’s the founder of Warslan Company, lost his physical condition and retired as the president, then her older brother Judal assumed as the president.

– Hayato-kun doesn’t know about Lunaltia Base? Karen-chan knows about it, right?

Amazed, Sakura said so.

– Yes, unlike the Earth, outer space can produce beautiful crystals without being influenced by gravity, so it seems probable that a specific medicine can be done for the disease that Karen is suffering from.

In other words, Karen said that the development of Lunaltia Base isn't just a whim.

– I'm sure that day isn't far. In the near future, there will be terraforming plans for the moon and mars.

– "Terraforming" ...?

– It's about creating a space where humans can live just like we do in the earth. In some way, this Little Garden is also one of those experiments.

Then, suddenly the PDA of Claire made a sound while Chris was explaining.

– It seems to be a call from Onii-sama desuwane...

Claire took out the PDA and murmured with a halfhearted expression and.

– Calling so suddenly, what do you need, Onii-sama?

As soon as the call started, one of the eyebrows of Claire goes down.

– That where am I? Right now, I am at the beach near the house, with the new members of *Selections*...

– Hey, that...!

The helicopter pointed out by the finger of Latia while screaming, gradually descends and lands on the beach where Hayato and the others are.

The girls had to hold their hair down due to the strong wind that suddenly arises from the helicopter.

The hatch opens and stairs come out.

The next thing that appeared from the helicopter was a man who wore a red suit and like Claire, he has golden hair and blue eyes, and a woman that has a bobcat haircut and gallant eyes, wearing clothes that give proof that she's a Slayer of Warslan Company.

She seems to be the bodyguard of the older brother of Claire.

Both the man and the woman give the impression of being 5, 6 years older than Hayato and company.

They stepped on something like a platform that was projecting out from the



hatch and slowly got down on the sandy beach.

– Doing such a surprising appearance, Onii-sama desuwane.

– I wanted to see my little sisters for quite a while. And as expected of my little sister. That swimsuit fits you perfectly.

– ... even with your flattery I'm not happy masenwa. So, what are you doing here?

Speaking of Claire's tone, it's like she's showing animosity towards him. Her facial expression is also stern.

– I was thinking of seeing the faces of the new students who will become the brave soldiers of Warslan in the near future.

Saying that, the man pointed his glance towards Hayato.

– You are Kisaragi Hayato.

– Yes, sir...

– The anticipated freshman of Little Garden, whose reaction value surpassed the one of my little sister. And, the holder of the《Blood called God》——

– ... 《Blood called God》?

– Oh, I'm talking to myself. Don't worry about it.

As he approached Hayato who referred to the question, Judal tapped his shoulder.

– I'm looking forward to your achievements from now on. And you over there, you are Emili... no, Emile Crossford-kun, correct?

Next, Judal points his eyes to Emile.

– I heard that you are an acquaintance of Dr. Charlotte. I'm also expecting things from you.

– ... thank you, very much.

Emile answers with an emotionless voice.

Judal also looked at Emile as if he was checking her on purpose.

As if he was saying “I know your real identity——”

– Of course, I'm expecting the efforts of every member of *Selections*. One last thing, Claire—

– What is it desuno?

– I have something to talk with you later. Please give me a call when you have time.

– ... understood.

– Well then, see you later. My favorite Ohime-sama.

Leaving those words with her, the man returns with the female Slayer back into the helicopter

It's going to the military section of Little Garden.



Then, the helicopter quickly rises and started to move towards the terminal

sector of Little Garden.

– ... my brother was unexpectedly rude mashitawa.

At the same time that the figure of her older brother disappeared, Claire sighed greatly, as if she was releasing tension from all her body.

Her expression is stiff and looks pretty tired.

– ... well then, I will excuse myself with this masuwa. Chris, Erika, Liddy. You are free to do as you wish from now masu.

– Are you heading to the place of your older brother?

– Yes desuwa.

Claire answered the question raised by Liddy and went back to the military section to follow her older brother.

She was suspicious about what he has to talk in private with her.



The next Monday. The PDA that was set in silent mode vibrated inside the pocket of Hayato with “brr\* *brr* at the end of the lesson of world history, that is, immediately after entering lunch break.

It’s the signal that an email has arrived.

Almost at the same time, Emile, who’s sitting in the front seat murmured 「Hmm, who is it?」, then took out the PDA from her pocket.

– You also received an email?

– Hayato also received one?

Emile asks a bit surprised.

Hayato nodded and took out the PDA from his pocket and took a look at the screen.

– It’s from the President.

– Mine is from the Prez too. It says: Come immediately to the Student Council

Room.

Hayato checks the contents of the email. And just like Emile, it says 『Come immediately to the Student Council Room』

– That email also arrived to us.

That's what Fritz and Latia are saying while approaching. Both of them have their PDA in their hands.

– I guess it must be a call to the members of *Selections* because I also received it.

It's not saying that it's an emergency call, so it's not to sortie due to a raid of the Savage.

There's no broadcast being transmitted inside the ship that goes after that

– What would they want, I wonder...

– Probably a request to bodyguard or protect something? I'd be happy if we have to fight against the Savage.

Latia had a cheerful expression when she said so.

Since becoming members of *Selections* and obtaining their dedicated Hundred, they have sortie only a single time so far.

Although she slaughtered a Savage, it's having some kind of influence on her that she hasn't sortie for over a month.

It can be seen she was being impatient and feeling nervous because she wants to go and do her duties right away.

– What do you think?

Fritz asked Hayato.

– Even if you say what do I think, why don't we just go and hear what they have to say for the time being?

– Okay then, let's go to the Student Council Room right now!

A voice called them out the moment Latia tried to walk vigorously towards the Student Council Room.



– Excuse me...

A girl with freckles, slender limbs and a long black hair that is tied on the back of her head, she's their classmate, Ryu Shuemei. She was late for the entrance ceremony of the martial arts department and one of the girls who was sentenced to be expelled from school by the president. The reason why their disposal was canceled is because Hayato had a duel with the president and that was brought to a draw. That action made her have a fairly good impression of Hayato. Consequently, she frequently talked to him together with Noah Sheldon, who was ordered to be expelled from the school by the president, asking for Hundred training.

But Noah isn't here today. Shuemei is alone.

– By any chance, did Shuemei-san also receive an email?

Hayato inquires Shuemei who's approaching.

– Actually, yes.

Hearing the answer of Shuemei, Hayato and the others exchanged glances.

– ... hmm so this isn't related to *Selections*?

Latia drops her shoulders and shows a disappointed look.

– That's something we won't know unless we go to the President. Anyway, let's go, the five of us. I think there's no more people who are being called other than us.

After Fritz said so, they asked their classmates if somebody was called by the President.

As a result, and seeing that nobody else was called from their class, Hayato, Emile, Fritz and Latia— and their classmate Shuemei leave the classroom, then headed to the Student Council Room.

– Come in.

When standing in front of the Student Council Room and knocking on the door, the voice of the President comes back.

When Hayato opened the door, he saw Claire sitting in the chair. She's wearing a red uniform, giving proof that she's the Student Council President.

Both to her left and right are the vice presidents wearing blue uniforms.

– Welcome, everyone. We were waiting for you.

Chris, who was operating the laptop that was opened on the desk, got up and held the opened door.

He's wearing his middle school uniform as always.

Looking at the five people who entered the room, Claire began to talk.

– The reason you came here like this is because you must participate in a certain strategy as members of *Selections* desu.

– I knew it! It was a mission of *Selections*! What kind of mission is!?

– It's a search-and-destroy operation of a nest of Savage desuwa.

– What!?

The eyes of Latia shine due to the unexpected development.

On the other hand, Shuemei was showing a confused expression.

– ... excuse me, why was I called for such an important strategy?

It's been three months since enrolling. Although it has been possible for her to deploy the Hundred and control *sense energy* to some extent, the person herself knows best that she's not on a level where she can fight the Savage.

Even in the competition held during the year, she got a fast rank, she ranked 21<sup>st</sup> when counted from the bottom.

– This doesn't mean that Ryu Shuemei will participate in the search-and-destroy operation itself. Actually, this search-and-destroy operation is going to be done in the Qin Empire, and the base camp will be built in the city of Tienchuen which is your hometown mashita. Therefore, I called you in order to accompany us and to be our guide desu.

– Ah, so that is the reason?

Shuemei sighed, feeling relieved.

A dim light shines on her darkened expression.

– But Prez. The Qin Empire is basically a country with many plains, isn't it? So,

is there a place where the Savage can be hiding?

– What Emile Crossford is saying is completely valid, but there is something more desuwayo. Chris, please project the map on the floating monitor.

– Roger.

Chris turned off the lights of the room with the wall switch, then moved to the laptop that he was manipulating until moments ago and pressed a key.

Then, a white world map emerged on the nearby white wall.

At the same time, Claire stood up.

– These are photographs of the earth taken from a military satellite.

Chris lifted the laptop and stood by the side of the floating monitor where super clear images were projected. The magnified pictures are focused on Qin Empire.

As Emile was saying, there are plenty of plains. Most of them are deserts. However, as the map moved to the west part of the Qin Empire, it turned out that there are many mountain-like areas.

The map stops there.

This place is a zone where mountains exceeding 6,000 meters height are along the border with the Empire of Rasiya, the Empire of Mongolia and the Republic of Ural and where numerous fragments of meteorite fell and exploded in the air at the time of the *First Attack*.

Chris zooms the map even more.

– When looking at this satellite picture, it can be seen that there are many small lakes everywhere in this alpine zone. Most of them are the falling traces of the meteorite fragments.

It seems that a lot of Savage came flying at that time and weren't exterminated. It wasn't possible to enter the mountains because the quantity of particle beams was too much and the viruses released to the atmosphere from the fallen meteorites were harmful to the human body.

However, in recent years the amount has decreased considerably, the Savage

moved actively and descended from the mountains, causing harm to the neighboring cities and villages, so that's why they decided to call this a search-and-destroy operation.

— — —and the range of this operation will be this circle.

Chris touches the screen of the laptop at hand and draws a circle mark on the map projected on the floating monitor.

— It's very wide.

It was Latia who leaked such impression.

— The range of the operation is set to surround the two big mountains, covering 50km. from east to west and 20km. from north to south. It is presumed that there are nearly 50 Savage.

— 50 of them...?

Following Hayato, the five freshmen revealed a surprised voice.

— This is purely a conjecture and nothing else, but the estimations say that they are a lot, and we could confirm from the satellite that their numbers are close to that.

— But, what are we going to do against such numbers of Savage? Even if Hayato and Emile— —no, even if the President-san is there, will we be able to win?

— Certainly, Fritz Grantz has a point with what he said. If all the 50 Savage assaulted at the same time, even if everyone in this place fights at the same time, that will only cause us to run out of *energy* before all of them are defeated. However, in this operation, it is very likely that there are Savage only to that extent in this range. It doesn't mean that we have to keep all of them occupied at the same time. Besides, we, Little Garden, aren't the only ones doing this search-and-destroy operation.

It was Erika who added that explanation.

— Eh, is that so?

— The operation is a joint operation unit led by the UN, and carried under the control of the peace-keeping force desuwa.

Claire answered the question of Latia.

Chris opens his mouth again.

– As I explained earlier, there is a high possibility that this place still has many fragments of meteorites that came flying from the distant universe during the *First Attack*—the so called *Variable Stones*. Therefore, the search-and-destroy operation is led by the UN, so Little Garden together with several private military companies and countries' armed forces are expected to participate.

– In other words, we are going to have fun fighting the Savage together with the Slayers of other countries and organizations!

The eyes of Latia shone even more brightly.<sup>19</sup>

– But, why us, some first-year students, were selected to do this large-scale operation? I mean, I think that this is something for second-year and third-year students...

Hayato thinks that it's unusual for the President to plan such an operation.

Even if they are members of *Selections*, first-year students shouldn't want to appear on the battlefield.

– There's a catch to it desu.

– A catch...?

Nodding with a meek expression, Claire continued.

– Since there are *Variable Stones*, there is a possibility that the *hunters* could hear about it and appear desu. The information of this operation will be shared extensively, including the general public narimasu. It will surely reach them, don't you agree?

– In short, does that mean that there's a possibility that the trio will appear?

– Correct desuwa, Fritz Grantz. That is the reason why we have chosen you, since you have fought with them arimasu. If you know the opponent, then that makes easier to deal with them.

– ... is that also the "choice" of 《LiZA》?

– ... No, it is not.



Erika answered.

– It was from Judal-sama, who is one of the advisors of the UN Supreme Council, and the one who originally proposed this search-and-destroy operation to the peace-keeping force of the UN.

– Then it's also the intention of the company president to include us in the strategy plan as Little Garden?

– Yes, it's also his intention. However, there is one point that Claire-sama added.

– We, the members of the Student Council, have also come with a plan for the operation desu.

Saying that, Claire continued.

– That is all what I had to say desuwa. For the joint operation led by the UN peace-keeping force, Emile Crossford, Latia Saint-Émilion and Fritz Grantz will have prohibited the use of *energy* from next week's beginning, which means: no duels nor sham battles by deploying Hundred shimasu. Are we clear desuwane?

The reason is for them to be in perfect conditions to face the operation.

The three of them replied all together.

– ... Err, what about me?

Hayato was concerned since his name wasn't included, so he raised a question to Claire.

– Only you are allowed to train until three days before the operation, in order to control the *energy* masu. However, please be careful to not use it pointlessly and don't act rashly.



The next day, after school, they heard about the sortie from Claire.

Hayato finished its maintenance and changes to his Variable Suit, then when he's in the middle of going to the practice ground under the supervision of Emile who's waiting there, since she finished changing clothes first.

– Oh, if it's Kisaragi Hayato-kun.

Suddenly a voice called out Hayato from his back.

He quickly understood from who that voice was.

It belongs to Judal Harvey, who's the president of Warslan Company, and the older brother of Claire who appeared suddenly at the beach the other day.

– ... Can I help you with something?

Turning around, he could see the figure of Judal wearing a red suit, just like when they had a talk at the sea.

The female Slayer of that day isn't at his side.

– There's a place I want to show you. Can you lend me a little of your time?

– Err, I'm sorry. Because my acquaintance is waiting for me in the practice ground and...

Saying that, Hayato tries to avoid the invitation.

(Somehow or other, it's difficult to deal with this person...)

Because he's over-familiar with him, he's not sure what attitude he must have with this kind of person, but he believes that he doesn't want to talk too much if possible with this person.

However, Judal doesn't seem to care about that at all,

– It won't take too much time. It will be pretty fast. Besides, since this is my request as the president of Warslan Company, nobody should complain about it. Of course, not even Claire, the Student Council President.

He's completely right.

Saying it like that, there's no way he can refuse him.

It looks as if it was an order from the company president in a roundabout way.

– ... understood.

Hayato nodded, though he put himself on guard.

– I'm glad that you say so. Let's go, Hayato-kun.

Judal turns back and starts to return from the way he came.

On his back, Hayato called him out.

– Can I ask one thing?

– ... what is it?

Looking back, Judal asks back.

– Please allow me to email the companion with whom I was going to meet now.

– Go ahead. But please, don't write my name.

– Why?

– Let's say that this is business with some rather special circumstances.

Just now, he said that he can make anyone consent if his name was pronounced.

*I knew it, I don't know how to deal with this person,* Hayato thought.

For the time being, Hayato didn't write the reason and did as he was told, so he decided to email Emile that he will be a little late.

He will surely be chased to the point that it will be troublesome after this.

– The email was sent.

– Then let's go.

Smiling with a *Fu*, Judal starts walking again, guiding Hayato.

("Special circumstances"; I wonder, where is he taking me...?)\*

**\*TN: You know where (ㄟ 5 ㄟ) xD Sorry, I couldn't resist.**

He's going down the stairs to the second level of the basement of the martial arts department school building.

Passing through the front of the Student Council Room, Judal goes further inside.

It's the first time for Hayato to come to this place.

Before long, they arrived at the front of a double door on which a plate labeled《DO NOT ENTER, AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY》*KEEP OUT* was affixed.

Judal puts the PDA that he took out of his pocket on the sensor attached to the wall, and the door opens.

– Why are you acting absentmindedly? If you don't come here quickly, the door will close.

Hayato is standing in front of the door, while Judal is already walking into the *KEEP OUT* section.

– But here it's written *KEEP OUT* so...

– I'm the president of Warslan Company. So, I'm absolutely authorized. And I'm attempting to guide you, so you are also authorized.

Pointing Hayato, Judal starts walking again.

While hesitating, Hayato also started walking, following him.

The elevator was beyond that point.

When Judal puts the PDA on the sensor installed on the side of the door, the elevator opened.

It's so small that only two people can get in it.

– It's fine if you get in first.

Doing as he was told, Hayato gets in the elevator and Judal also gets in it, and the door closed.

The elevator begins to slowly go down to the lower level of Little Garden.

– Hayato-kun, do you believe in any religion?

– Eh...?

– I'm asking if you have belief in some religion.

– No, I don't...

Hayato answers to the sudden question while being puzzled.

He doesn't have belief in any religion in particular. That is true.

– If so, let me change the question. Hayato-kun, who do you think made this world?

– Well...

He was lost for words, clogging with the answer.

Judal was looking at the face of Hayato with a look like a child waiting for the desert to come after a meal, he was looking forward so much the answer that he couldn't bear it.

– ... God?

That's the answer that came out after thinking about it for a while.

– I see, God, huh. Ahahaha!

Seeming that he was satisfied with the answer of Hayato, and with a smile of satisfaction, he relaxed his mouth.

– That's fine, it's an appropriate answer for Liberians who have many believers of 《Sacred Church》*Puritaria*.

Saying that as if he was impressed, Judal continued.

– Let's continue with the question. God made this world. God is so omniscient and omnipotent that he can control everything in this world. If so, then why he sent the Savage to the earth, even though humankind is a divided part of himself? Or why he didn't try to stop the many meteorites that came flying to the earth? What do you think about that, Hayato-kun?

Again, a difficult question.

After a few seconds of silence, Hayato answers.

– ... I don't know.

He considered that it was an unexpected question and thought that it wasn't a question that can be replied right away, so he could only answer like that.

– That's also an appropriated answer. At any rate, even I don't know the answer. But, there are a lot of hypotheses.

When the door of elevator opens, a narrow corridor of a single way is visible to the eye.

In the back of it there was a concrete door that seemed to be even more thicker than the previous one.

Judal resumes talking while moving his feet towards that door.

– Some say that the invasion of the meteorites is the 《Iron Hammer of God》. The so-called “Judgment of God” — — *Judgment*. The meteorite, and the attacks of the Savage are the alarms that God sounded at us, the humans, that he is angry. People have evolved too much, getting too close to God. It is a mistake not only to repeat the conflict but also to attempt to advance into the universe. That’s why he’s giving us this punishment, sending the Savage that are the 《Messengers of God》.

– That story looks similar to the 《Tower of Babel》.

– Hou, so you have read the 《Scriptures》 *Apocrypha*?

– I read about them when I was staying in Gudenburg a long time ago. I also went to the church of *Puritaria* several times.

When he went to pray with his parents so that the illness of her little sister would heal, he got the *Apocrypha*.

– Which reminds me, you were staying in Gudenburg at the time of the *Second Attack*, yes? If so, then it’s natural for you to know about it since you read the *Apocrypha*. I thought it was unusual for someone coming from Yamato.

Slipping out a smile, Judal continued.

– If that’s the case, let’s talk about the next theory for the current hypothesis. The fall of the meteorites and the invasions of the Savage are prompting the evolution of God to mankind.

There’s a sensor attached to the door they arrived.

Judal stopped his feet and holds the PDA on the sensor, but unlike so far, it looks like the door doesn’t open by itself. Over the sensor, buttons with numbers 0 to 9 are drawn, and 『Erase Button』 and 『OK Button』 come to the front.

– By the way, my view is neither of the two hypotheses I said so far.

Supposing that God wants to swing his iron hammer to mankind, I believe that mankind can overcome it and approach God. We mankind have that wisdom already.

He keeps talking while pressing the numerical buttons with his fingers without hesitation.

– Mankind got the《Forbidden Fruit》called the *Variable Stone*, and reached the point where they used the cores that are the source of life of the《Messengers of God》to crush the Savage that are nothing more than things used by God. Human beings are surpassing the laws of physics and the law of nature established by God, and even possibly be more than God... ah, I'm sorry. Was this an uninteresting story for Hayato-kun?

– No, that's not it...

He was frightened rather than being bored.

It seemed that he could understand what this person is thinking, but that's not the case.

– Then, let me ask you another question. Hayato-kun, do you know what the power of Little Garden is?

– ... nuclear power... I guess?

– In effect. The power of Little Garden is covered by nuclear power generation by a nuclear fusion reactor. However, that's only a part of it.

– A part of it?

– Please think very carefully. The power of the huge Academy City ship in addition to the electric power of the residents living on it, the research technological development in the military and medical supplies field, the development of the Hundred and the training of the Slayers—the maintenance and management of the quantum computers, etcetera, we couldn't afford from the very beginning to cover the electricity power of our cutting-edge technology with just a small fusion reactor. Then, how do you complement the insufficient part? The answer is this.

When Judal pressed the 『OK Button』, the security was released.



The door in the opposite direction opens automatically.

– That’s...

In the center of the dimly circular room, a capsule with a design of a flower bud filled with fluorescent color liquid shone gently.

What can be seen in the capsule is the figure of a girl with blond hair, she was completely naked, cords similar to ivies were twining around her body and something like blue roses are spreading all over.

And a wild rose tiara placed on her head can be seen.

——Imprisoned Thorn Princess.

Such words floated in his mind.

– That’s what is being referred to as 《LiZA》.

Coincident with the door closing on the back, Judal answers, relaxing his mouth and grinning.

– You are kidding, 《LiZA》was a human...

The back muscles of Hayato shivered.

Even though there were times when it responded like a person using characters, he never thought that it could be such a thing.

– I can see you are quite surprised. This is the 《Highest Decision-Making Body》*LittleGarden Zenith Agency of Little Garden*. Taking the first letter of the words from there, the term《LiZA》is **formed**.

– ... **formed**?

– After all, 《LittleGarden Zenith Agency》means that it’s no more than a fake play on words devised by Charlotte Dimandius. Anyhow, 《LiZA》is taken from her name——Liza Harvey.

Having said that, Hayato turned his eyes once again to Liza Harvey, who is《LiZA》.

He only looked at her for a moment, but he felt that she resembles her.

She looks like Claire Harvey, the Student Council President of Little Garden.

– It's just as you are thinking Hayato-kun, Liza Harvey is my and Claire's little sister.

Judal told him, as if he could read the thought of Hayato.

– And she's the first person that was born having an infected body, and also a Slayer.

At that moment, they heard footsteps.

The door opens and Hayato looks back.

– ... pre, sident?

In the hands of Claire Harvey who appeared, an anesthetic gun for anti-Slayers usage, 《N Tranquilizer》, was held.

The muzzle is directed to her older brother, Judal.

– Onii-sama, why did you bring Kisaragi Hayato here desu? Please answer.

– Yareyare, pointing such a dangerous thing towards me. It would be surprising if Liza wakes up. Claire has become quite a tomboy—hmm?

He turns both palms into the air as if he was joking.

But the facing Claire doesn't back down.

She didn't lower the muzzle.

– I will ask you again masuwa. Why did you bring Kisaragi Hayato to this place desu?

– He, without a doubt, will be a Slayer that represents Warslan in the near future, don't you agree? That's why, I think that it's better for him to know in advance that Little Garden has things that you absolutely need to protect—the existence of this **thing** that can change the power balance of the world.

– ...!!

Claire twitched her cheeks and said with great anger.

– **Judal**, please don't treat my little sister as a thing. And, for that alone, you brought Kisaragi Hayato to this place?

– There are other reasons, of course.

– What are those reasons desuno?

– Because his body is infected, he may be able to wake up Liza.

– Wha...

Looking at the appearance of the shaking Claire, Judal shows a thin smile.

– To wake up Liza you say... how, in what way...

– Hayato-kun, it seems the time has come to wake up the Thorn Princess who has fallen in an eternal sleep by eating the poisoned apple given by the witch. Please kiss Liza at once.

– “A kiss”? even if I was told that, such a thing is...

He looks up at Liza.

The completely naked figure of the Thorn Princess is sleeping, her eyes are closed.

Hayato once again takes his eyes away from her.

– That’s right desuwa, what in the world are you saying, Onii-sama! How can he do something like kissing Liza when she’s inside the capsule...?

– Just kidding.

– Just kidding!?

– Kiss is the last resort. Touch the capsule with your hand for now and release *energy*. Please give it a try.

Being told that by Judal, Hayato points his eyes to Claire.

He’s seeking confirmation as to whether he can touch it or not.

Claire was hanging her head without moving, but eventually she raised her face and gave a nod with a worried expression, as if she was preparing herself for something.

The attitude that she revealed gave permission to Hayato, it is fine to touch it.

Nevertheless, Liza wasn’t wearing clothes.

Looking at the nakedness of the girl, he imagines the childhood of the President who’s right next to him, but then he embraces those thoughts, as if

he was doing something very sinful.

So Hayato moved to the side of the capsule with his face looking down and stretched his hand.

Then, he releases *energy*.

– Ah...!

Opening his mouth without thinking, Hayato looked up at Liza.

The fluorescent color liquid in the capsule gently started to cast light.

– Liza is, reacting...

Just like Claire said, the body of Liza was shining dimly.

However, Liza doesn't wake up, there's no change, and after taking 10 seconds or so, the light slowly fades, and the inside of the capsule returns to its original state.

– Unfortunately, it seems that she hasn't woken up, But, we got results. Like when Kirishima Sakura was doing the *live* at the Zwei Islands, it seems that Liza showed the same kind of reaction just now, so I considered that it was worth the trying.

– Onii-sama, why you...

Claire looked quite surprised.

Obviously Hayato didn't know, but from the flow of the conversation, it seems that Liza showed a reaction while Sakura was doing a *live* at the Zwei Islands.

At that time, what Hayato remembered is about the regenerator type Savage that he fought at the Zwei Islands.

That Savage showed a reaction to the voice of Sakura and stopped moving.

At the same time, he also remembers the story he heard from Sakura at the canyon.

(Surely, as with Sakura, the friend of Sakura who was turned into an artificial Variant, I was told that the song of Sakura calmed her down...)

... then both are related to Liza's reaction?

He wonders about it, but he can't talk about that in front of Judal.

– I heard that from nobody other than Charlotte Dimandius.

– ...!!

When Judal replies, Claire suddenly clenches her teeth in vexation.

– Why do you put such a face? She's in a fair position after all. She's just giving me information in a fair way too. In the first place, her affiliation is Warslan HQ, and not Little Garden.

– ... I know masuwayo, Onii-sama. You have finished already what you had to do, correct? Then I wonder if you can get out of here quickly.

– Yareyare, I understand. You don't have to kick me out of here. However, let me say one last thing.

– ... what is it desuno?

– **If she's alive**, it may be possible that she'll be after Liza. That's why I'm impatient. For the awakening of Liza.

– You mean Vitaly Tynyanov desuwane.

– Exactly.

Vitaly Tynyanov.

It's the name of the doctor who turned Kirishima Sakura into an artificial Variant.

When Judal mentioned her, the name was floating in the head of Hayato.

After the incident of Sakura, the intelligence department of Little Garden investigated Vitaly and discovered that an explosion accident happened in the prison immediately after she was imprisoned.

After that, the Kingdom of Rasiya didn't give an official announcement that Vitaly was missing.

It looks like they hid the accident of the prison.

Currently, there is no information saying that Vitaly died or not in that

accident.

However, they should think that she's indeed alive, since the gang of three gave her name.

– That's why I think that if Vitaly is alive, I'd like her to be captured quickly. It's possible that she resents us because I fired her. That's why I'm looking forward to this operation. You may be able to capture the three *hunters* that are **her** hands and feet.

– You also heard that story from Charlotte desuwane...?

– Of course. She and I are like college coworkers.

Immediately after Judal answered, Claire opened her eyes in a big way.

– Don't tell me Onii-sama that the operation of the UN peace-keeping forces is to lure Vitaly...?

Judal broadly smiled as she answered correctly.

. Everything to win the fight against God.

– Onii-sama doesn't want the seat of the president of Liberia?

– It must be remembered that that's not my goal. If it's necessary for **my objective**, only then I'll do so. I won't say anything else. Hayato-kun and my little sisters in front of me, how about if we slowly talk about this from here on?

– ... Onii-sama, what are you saying!?

– If an excellent Slayer becomes a member of the Harvey family, then I welcome him, what do you think, Hayato-kun?

– Eh?

– Please stop, Judal!

Claire shouts, her face is deep red.

She was highly strung by her emotions.

The proof of that is that she addressed him as Judal instead of Onii-sama.

– Hahaha, I intended that to be a joke, but it seems that it affected you more than I thought. Well then, I will take my leave.

Saying that, Judal left the side of Liza and goes back to the surface using the elevator.

– Err...

Hayato is bewildered about what to do,

– ... we will also return masuwayo.

Saying that, and following Claire who walks towards the elevator, Hayato also left the front of Liza.

The silence rules in the elevator.

– Why don't you ask anything desuwane?

– ... because the President had a face meaning that she didn't want to be asked about it.

When Hayato answered, the president smiled,

– I will talk when the time comes masuwa.

\*Ding\*, a sound is heard, and the door opens.

Getting off from the elevator, Claire turns on her heels and continued looking at Hayato.

– What you have seen and heard here is absolutely confidential. This is a matter of the highest priority. Are we clear desuwane?

Hayat nodded in silence.



Charlotte Dimandius, a woman with white skin and ruffled hair, and who's sitting in a laboratory chair that serves the person in charge who's herself, was tapping the optical keyboard while holding a candy in her mouth as usual as a sugar supplement.

What is displayed on the floating monitor in front of her is the data that monitored the state of 《LiZA》.

– It seems like Judal has moved, huh.



She immediately found out that he had contacted Kisaragi Hayato with《LiZA》. It was because the thoughts of 《LiZA》remained in the log.

《It's been a while, Kisaragi Hayato》

《No, isn't this the first time that we meet face to face like this?》

And so on.

Charlotte types on the optical keyboard and asks Liza.

『What are your impressions of Kisaragi Hayato, now that you met his face directly?』

《I was embarrassed because aside from my family, he was able to see me completely naked》

《If you don't mind, would you put some clothes on me?》

– Wahahahaha.

Charlotte gave a great laughter, looking at the comments sent from 《LiZA》.

– It looks like the reaction of a maiden, isn't it?

It's Mei Mei, a girl in a maid dress, with cat ears attached on her head and who's the assistant of Charlotte who said so while laughing.

– If she was growing normally, Liza would be rushing into the secondary sex characteristics, isn't it? Humans learn to be ashamed of their secondary sex characteristics. Be that as it may, it's truly surprising that Liza talks with such degree of loquacity.

The log at the time she reacted to the singing voice of Sakura,

《It's a nice song》

Only a few words.

– This may suggest that her awakening is really close. Or perhaps, like Claire, she's quite pleased with Kisaragi Hayato?

Charlotte smiled, looking at the figure of Liza Harvey that is shown on the watching monitor.

– Clothes may really be necessary soon. Mei Mei, can you prepare something?

– Yes, leave it to me! I am going to prepare some extraordinarily lovely clothes!

## Chapter 2: Joint Operation *The Secret of Emilia Nest of the Savage*

Hayato and his companions are heading now to the town of Tienchuen, located at the western edge of the Qin Empire, where the basecamp of the UN Peacekeeping Forces is established. They are on board of the [WL-03], it's tilt-rotor aircraft that performs vertical takeoff and landing.

**\*TN: Tienchuen is the furigana reading for 天全, the reading in Chinese is Tianquan.**

– We haven't reached the basecamp yet, even though it's been a while since entering Qin Empire, huh.

Latia said, while yawning, looking bored.

It was late last night when they boarded the personal airplane with members of *Selections*, together with the staff and students of Little Garden that will support the Slayers which were gathered for the sortie of this operation.

It takes around 10 hours to arrive, so they decided to sleep in the bunk beds that were placed in the rooms prepared separately for men and women.

They slept for 6 six hours.

After they got up and ate the prepared breakfast, they went to do maintenance to their Variable Suits and their Hundreds.

Charlotte Dimandius, who's the *main technologist* of Little Garden and Mei Mei, her assistant, aren't accompanying them in this operation.

Nonetheless, two engineers belonging to the senior high school of Little Garden are on board, so the Maintenance Room is connected to Little Garden through a communication line.

Therefore, Charlotte and Mei Mei are also monitoring the data values, so if it's about fine tuning or even tinkering with the molecule arrangement of the Hundred and the Variable Suit, there shouldn't be any problem in particular.

Hayato and the others enter the equipment installed alongside the wall one by one, in order, and connect with the Variable Suit.

It measures their current vital, *energy* and mental condition and changes the molecular arrangement that composes the dedicated Hundred that is given in advance so to show off the maximum performance they can get with that.

The same is true for all the Variable Suits.

– It seems we’re all ready with this.

Fritz said, as the Variable Suit of Hayato came down from the device.

In this place, the freshmen group is gathered, with the exception of Shuemei who’s not wearing her Variable Suit and isn’t going to appear on the battlefield.

The president and the vice presidents and the other members of *Selections* have already finished the maintenance of their Hundred.

– Yes, Hayato.

It’s Emile who retrieved the Hundred that finished its maintenance and put it on the hands of Hayato

With this, everyone has truly finished.

– How much till we arrive?

– I don’t know but, the mountain on the direction over there can be seen.

Emile answers while looking outside of the window.

Hayato who also presented the question looks outside the window in the same way.

– Oh, it’s true. It’s very big.

– That’s Kunlun Mountain. Its altitude is of 7328 meters. Beyond that it’s Kongur Mountain, situated along the national border with the Republic of Ural, the Empire of Rasiya and the Empire of Mongolia.

That explanation was given by Shuemei, the guide.

She was quite nervous at the beginning, because she was surrounded by the seniors and members of *Selections*, as well as the members of the Student

Council, but she was getting very calm as time progressed.

– That means that we should be arriving to our destination soon?

– Yup, I think that it shouldn't take more than an hour.

Shuemei replied the question of Latia that was thrown at her.

Next, Emile opens her mouth.

– Then, it's time to change our clothes. We won't be able to hang around the streets with this appearance.

As Shuemei said, around thirty minutes later, the personal airplane started to gradually lower its altitude and landed in Tienchuen plateau where the UN Peacekeeping Forces' base camp was established satisfactorily.

– This place does really give a vibe that we are going to fight, don't you think?

Fritz, who went down the ramp, whistled with a \*Hyu\* when surveying the base camp.

Hayato also thinks the same.

Near them they can see the helicopters with the flags of countries and the crest of organizations in various places, many tents are lined up, there are triangular ones that resemble the ones in venues of sports festivals, and simple accommodation stations, the place is so big, as if it was a mobile safari park.

In addition to that, they were able to see people with a variety of skin colors, wearing various kinds of uniforms.

– Yeah, it's kind of exciting.

Latia muttered.

Again, Hayato agrees. He was a little nervous while feeling that he came to the battlefield.

– Hey hey, isn't too early to be shivering with excitement? Because the operation starts tomorrow, you know?

– I-I know that, and don't put your hand on my head!

Latia shakes off the hand of Fritz that was placed on her head with her own

hands, baring her teeth.

Hayato and the others laugh, seeing the usual scene.

Thanks to that, they feel that the thread of tension became loose.

Latia seems to be tensionless already.

They guess that was the concern of Fritz.

Claire opened her mouth there.

– We are going to say our greetings to the Integrated Command Leader of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, who is commanding this operation masuwa. Each of the other members will have liberty of action until the time of the rally masu.

The rally is a social gathering and a dinner party where all the participating members of this joint operation gather together. They heard from Claire who was in the special aircraft that the rally will be held in three hours.

– Liberty of action huh, so what do we do?

Fritz asked a question to them, but everyone folded their arms, hung their head and sunk into silence.

It was because they weren't thinking about what to do. Claire opened her mouth again, looking such state of Hayato and company.

– If you don't have anything to do, then why don't you head towards the hotel while being guided by Shuemei to the town? The hotel is also in the town, so I think it's the best thing to do masuwayo.

– Considering the round-trip time to the town, we won't have much free time\*, so I'm in, what about you?

\*TN: Meaning that it was better than doing nothing.

– I'm fine with that too.

Following Fritz, Latia also accepts Claire's suggestion.

– Hayato, you are going too, right?

– Yeah.

When Hayato nods at Emile, Fritz gazed at Shuemei and,

– If that’s the case, can you guide us, Ryu-san?

– Yes, of course.

According to Shuemei who nodded, there’s a distance of 10 kilometers from this base camp to the town area of Tienchuen.

The only means of transportation to the city is by car— —

So, after they said their goodbyes to the members of the Student Council, Hayato and co. were sent to the city by the soldiers of the UN Peacekeeping Forces who were in the base camp.

They were in front of a medium sized tractor that took them there.

They were placed on the load-carrying tray section of it.

It can’t be helped because there’s no other choice than this to be able to carry 5 people at the same time.

The tractor runs through the wilderness while cutting off the lukewarm wind.

– Don’t expect too much in Tienchuen, because it’s nothing more than a rural area, there’s nothing to see. There’s not even a train station. As you see, that also goes to the surroundings of the town.

Though they see buildings similar to residences, and things that look like silos once in a while, it’s just wilderness as far as the eye can see. Speaking of what’s noticeable, just animals and sandstorms that are welling up in the distance are in that category. After 15 minutes on the tractor, Hayato and the others arrived at the town.

Just like Shuemei was emphasizing a lot of times, certainly the sight of the town area of Tienchuen was of a rural town itself.

The roads are wide, and buildings are very scarce.

In the exact same way, they couldn’t see almost nobody.

However, the appearance of a resplendent building, having red as its main constituent like the ones of the Ryukyu Kingdom,\* is fresh for all of them who visited this country for the first time, it draws a lot of attention.

**\*TN: Ryukyu Kingdom was an independent kingdom that ruled most of the Ryukyu**



## Islands from the 15th to the 19th century

– There are quite a few wonderful large buildings when looking at the site alone, but there aren't many high buildings in this place, huh?

Latia murmured, looking restlessly around the town.

– There is plenty of land in the desert area, and the fact that I live in this area it's because they weren't agricultural people in the first place, but nomadic people. They have even less consciousness to settle down.

Of course, it's Shuemei who explained so. She's slightly knitting the inner part of her eyebrows with a little of sadness and continued her words.

– There are only children and old people remaining in this village. Most of the youngsters work away from home or find a job in urban areas or other countries, and many of them settle where they are.

– So, this is what is called an underpopulated area, right?

– That's definitely the case here.

When Shuemei nodded, two voices called her out.

– Ah, it's Shuemei-nee-san!

– It's true, Shuemei-nee-chan!

– Bakuei and Mei Fan!

Looking at the two rushing over her, Shuemei makes her eyes blink in surprise.

Emile asked, looking at them.

– Who are these children?

– These are children in my neighborhood, and the group of kids I was teaching studies. As I said earlier, there are only a few youngsters around here...

In brief, the number of teachers was insufficient and the child in the upper grade taught the children of lower grades.

– Nee-chan, the person standing next to you, is he the boyfriend of nee-chan?

– Stop, Bakuei!

Shuemei, whose face was bright red, grabbed in a hurry the index finger of the boy that was pointed at Hayato.

– Y-you guys, you know that they are the ones who are going to do the search-and-destroy operation of the nest of the Savage that is near here, right?

– Yes, we know. Because of that, Shuemei-nee-san came back from Little Garden to this town, didn't she?

– Err, that's correct but, my job isn't that great...

Asked by the girl named Mei Fan, Shuemei shows a troubled smile.

Despite being dismayed with what's up with them, Shuemei seems to have decided to introduce everyone.

– That's right, they are my classmates and excellent Slayers belonging to Little Garden. They are thousands of times more amazing than me.

– Wow, is that so!? I'm also training to become a Slayer!

The gaze of the boy who's looking at Hayato and the others changes to a look of envy.

Shuemei showed a relieved look and asked the children.

– Both of you will go to the dojo after this?

– Yes, that is correct.

It's Mei Fan who answered.

– Come to see us later nee-chan, and tell us a lot of things, okay!? Thanks to nee-chan, we were able to have a dōjō in this village!

Following her, Bakuei said so.

– Yup, I'll do it, I promise. Then, get going to the dōjō at once. I'll also go see you afterwards. See you later.

– Yup, see you later——

– Please make sure to come!

The kids disappeared while waving their hands.

Shuemei took a breath, seeing off their backs.

– I’m sorry, those kids said weird things.

And, Shuemei apologizes to Hayato.

– No, don’t worry about it.

– Shuemei-san sure is adored by those children, isn’t it?

– No, that’s not true at all.

Shuemei laughed at herself and continued.

– When I was teaching studies, they never listened to what I said. They were always saying “useless elder sister, useless elder sister” to me.

However, after she got a sufficient value in the response test of the *Variable Stone* received by coincidence, she says that it’s from there that they began to hear what she was saying.

– I’m sure it’s because of the Private Military Companies like Little Garden and Qin Empire that came to do the aptitude test to see if there were any talented children.

As a result, two Slayer candidates were discovered, and subsidiary aid came to the village, and so the dojo managed by the Qin Empire was built in this town.

– Besides, for these children, the Slayers of Warslan who fight the Savage, they are their yearning existences. That’s why I also want to be a proper fighting power of Warslan, so that I can be proud of myself, and for that I can’t give up, don’t you agree?

Shuemei suddenly clenched her fists in front of her chest, telling that to herself.

They walk for about five minutes and get to the center of the city.

Many street stalls are appearing, selling food among other things. They were able to see the likes of set meals and specials of the day, it was crowded with approximately the same amount of people as Central in Little Garden.

(... wh-what’s this?)

Although the temperature in this place was quite hot, the moment when they passed by three people wearing robes with hoods, shivers run through the muscles of the back of Hayato, who stopped his feet.

Page 97

Their faces weren't visible, but the skin visible from the sleeve is darkish.

(Maybe, those guys are...)

What it came to his mind is the gang of three.

– What is it, Hayato? Why are you not moving...? Did you notice something?

– N-no... it's....

They were already told that they might encounter them in this place.

But, were they really the hunters?

While he was thinking about that, he couldn't see their appearances anymore.

(Maybe they were other people)

There were many aircrafts at the airport a while ago.

It shouldn't be strange that there are people dressed like that and that have darkish skin.

– ... it's nothing.

Hayato answered so and ran off to the side of Emile and the others.



Before long, the hotel they arrived at was relatively large in the village, it was a beautiful and magnificent building. It's a two-storied building, unlike the other buildings, and its site area is quite large.

– This hotel was built recently, it's even more smaller than a public lodging house, and something like sour smell comes out from the futons\*.

**\*TN: This sentence and the next 4 were so ambiguous and confusing that I don't know if**

**I translated them properly. My apologies if they sound kind of weird :c**

Shuemei laughed as if she was self-deprecating.

That kind of lodging place is disliked by ambassadors of foreign countries, government officials and executives who came from the capital city, saying how such a splendid hotel was built in this way.

– That means they don't want normal people of the Qin Empire and distinguished guests to be mixed up using it, yes? That is, by employing very expensive accommodation costs.

– In short, we, and Shuemei of course, are lucky to be able to stay with the money of Little Garden today.

– Well, I'm not staying here today, because I'm going to stay at home. I also told the president about that.

– Eh, is that so? It's a waste if we don't use it.

– You may be right, but I can't calm down, even though I'm not coming out to the battlefield, I don't feel well...

– If so, what do we do till it's time to rally?

The one who made that question was Emile.

– I promised them that I'll make an appearance at the dōjō a little while ago, so I'm going to show my face to my home for a moment. You are welcome to relax in your rooms at ease, so don't worry about me.

Hayato and the others checked-in at the hotel they were guided by Shuemei and headed to their respective rooms.

All of them are the same, a single room of around 8 tatamis.

– Then Hayato, see you later.

Separating from everyone, Hayato enters the room.

Both latitude and altitude should be higher than the vicinities of the Ryukyu where Little Garden was sailing recently, but the Qin Empire felt very hot.

As a matter of course, that goes for this room as well.

The military and family section of Little Garden have air conditioning control, with the exception of some areas.

Therefore, it's a bit chilly unless wearing the coat of the uniform all the time, but that's not the case for this town. His inner shirt was wet as a dust cloth. As the suitcase with change of clothes reached the room, he felt fortunate that he can change clothes.

(I should take a shower before that...)

Hayato decided so and took off his clothes in the dressing room and start showering in the bathroom.

Then, something like a singing voice was suddenly heard.

– ... hmm?

He twists the faucet and stops the shower.

He clearly heard a singing happy voice that matches a cheerful melody.

(No way, that voice is...)

... it's from Kirishima Sakura.

The hurrying Hayato jumped out of the bathroom.

The singing voice is flowing out from the uniforms' coat pocket.

Rapidly Hayato takes out the PDA and checks the screen.

It was indicated that it was an incoming call from Kirishima Sakura.

(Between all people, it's the person herself, huh...)

Hayato said, looking amazed, and accepted the call.

– You tampered my PDA, isn't it?

The day before yesterday, when he went to the hospital room of Karen, Sakura was there, and he lent the PDA to her because she told him to lend it for a moment.

The reason was that she was going to install new songs in it, but not that she was going to set one of them as a ringtone.

[Ahaha, correct. Did it surprise you?]

– It did, and a lot. I’m glad that I was in the hotel, because if this suddenly rang in the street, then that wouldn’t be a laughing matter, you know.

[Then at that time you could say.”Kirishima Sakura is my woman” ... wouldn’t be nice if you emphasize it with a triumphant look?]

– Hey...

She laughs, saying so as if it was a joke.

But that wasn’t funny.

– So, how can I restore it to how it was before?

[I’ll restore it once you came back]

– Oh no...

Hayato sighed deeply.

[Hey, what’s with that reaction? We were immensely worried about you]

– Worried, you say? What do you mean?

[You promised Karen-chan that you would contact her as soon as you arrived at Qin Empire, isn’t it? And yet, knowing that very well, you didn’t do it. You said “hotel” now, so that means you already arrived in Qin Empire, right?]

– Wait a minute, how do you know about the promise between Karen and me?

[Ehehe, that’s because I’m right now with Karen-chan]

– ... you guys, what are you planning to do? Don’t blow strange things into Karen.

[I’m just helping with the rehabilitation of Karen-chan as usual. And a bit about the founding festival]

– Founding festival? What are you going to do there?

The founding festival is a festival for students and residents of Little Garden where they interact with the residents of Liberia once a year.

Speaking of Yamato’s schools, it’s also like a school festival.

[That-is-a-se-cret♪]



Hayato sighed once again, hearing the answer.

– At least, don't let Karen do unreasonable things.

[I know that. Karen-chan wants to talk with you]

[Hello, Nii-san?]

Following a few seconds of noise, the voice of Karen was heard.

– Are you okay? Nothing weird was done to you by Sakura?

[Why do you feel that I'm a sort of hostage? I'm fine. Because Sakura-san is very kind]

– It's fine if that's the case but...

[Besides that, I have an advice for Nii-san]

– ... an advice?

About what?

He felt a little reluctant about it, because the voice of Karen became serious in no time.

[It's about the job of my brother in Qin Empire. I told Nii-san's fortune using the Tarot, but the result is the inverted position of 《Balance》. This means that a confrontation may rise]

– A confrontation, huh...

[This is nothing more than a reference, but please be careful]

– Yeah, I'll be careful. Thank you.

Recently, the fortune-telling of Karen has been very precise.

Particularly excellent when things go south, so rather than being “fortune-telling”, it feels more like a curse now.

——Confrontation.

Someone will have to fight someone.

Depending on the situation, it may change to organization vs organization.

[The fortune-telling of Karen-chan regarding Nii-san ended with this. I expect

that Nii-san will come home safely. Now, should I hand over the phone to Sakura-san again?]

– No, it's fine.

[It's not fine!]

It seems like she heard his voice.

He hears the voice of Sakura once again.

[Let me say one last thing to finish]

– One last thing...?

[Hayato, I love you. Let's get married once you come back]

– Huh? What the...

[Are you shaking? You shouldn't rise a death flag, you know]

– Stop joking! You know what, I'm hanging up!

Hearing the laughs and giggles, Hayato finished the call.

– Really, how far can your pranks go...?

Grieving again with a “yareyare”, Hayato took a shower then changed clothes to new shirt and pants.

He knows well that he's liked by Sakura.

But he doesn't know how serious she is...he thinks.

– I got tired pretty fast...

When he lay down on the bed with a \*thud\*, wearing a shirt and shorts only, and while being like that, the PDA began playing the singing voice of Sakura again.

(...is she again?)

With that in mind, and when he got up and picked up the PDA, it wasn't the name of Karen nor Sakura the one displayed there, but the name of Emile.

When trying to press the call button, *KNOCK KNOCK*, the door sounds, and the incoming call is interrupted.

– Hayato, it's almost time for the meeting... and, what's with that music?

The voice of Emile that he heard was somewhat disgusted.

– I'm going to change clothes now, so please wait a bit.

Replied Hayato, then rapidly changed clothes and went outside, and he saw the appearance of Emile with a dissatisfying expression on her face.

– Sorry for, keep you waiting...

– Everyone seems to be gathering in the lobby. Let's move.

Emile turned her face away and started walking towards the lobby.

Hayato also stepped forward, following her.

And after a silent time that lasted 10 seconds,

– ... hold on, Hayato.

– What is it?

– It's about the ringtone just now——

– I knew you were going to delve into that matter...

– Why are you saying that? And Why Hayato has set the song of Sakura as the PDA's ringtone?

– Well, that... I lent the PDA to Sakura in the hospital room of Karen, so she set it under her own accord.

– Is that true?

Emile comes near him, pressing the question.

He saw that her eyes are slightly wet.

– I-it's true! I don't know why I have her song as my ringtone!

– Or is it something like a promise, or a symbol between you two? Because that's how it is to me.

– I'm telling you, it's not like that. If I return, then she'll put the original ringtone. So believe me.

– ... fine, if that's the case, then I'll believe Hayato who says so.

Saying so, Emile presented her left hand.

– Lend me the PDA. I'll put back the original one.

Hayato unlocks the PDA by fingerprint authentication and handed it to Emile. While walking, Emile changes the ringtone.

– It should be fine with this.

Hayato received the PDA from Emile.

Emile did a phone call as a test.

The sound that was returning was the default one.

Sakura's the one to blame, so it can't be helped.

He was positive that he was going to feel safe for now, so there shouldn't be any problems if he gets an incoming call in public in this way.

They finally reached the lobby and not only the members of the Student Council, but also Latia, Fritz, Shuemei and the other Slayers of Little Garden, as well as the people heading to the rally were gathered already there. According to the president, pickup cars are already in front of the hotel.

As they moved to that place, they could see three hired cars similar to the one that was in the Zwei Islands.

The members of the Student Council, Shuemei, the four Slayers of the *Selections* team and three other Slayers get into the cars.

– Come to think of it, where's this meeting?

– I heard from the President-san before that it seems that is a venue built at the base camp of this operation that arrived in a personal airplane.

Fritz answers Emile's question.

– Oh, that's right. Is there going to be food of this country? I'd be happy if that's the case. I like the food of Qin Empire.

– ... you have cooking of Qin in Gudenburg?

– Yeah, there is.

Emile nods.

– The cooking of Qin has a strong flavor compared to the lightly seasoned cooking of Britannia. And I found them very tasty. So, I'd be happy if there's cooking of Qin Empire.

They reached the base camp, the venue of the rally meeting that also served as a dinner party in 10 minutes.

The number of helicopters increased in comparison to when Hayato and the others came to this place.

It seems that there are going to be interviews, since they were able to see vehicles of TV stations.

– Oh! Looks like the venue of the rally is over there.

Latia looked towards the space that was surrounded by many tents.

A number of round tables were installed there, and a lot of Slayers and people who seem to be authorized gathered there too.

– Let's go.

Everyone started walking into the noise.

There were still 15 minutes until the rally started, and around 100 people were gathered in the venue.

Including those who are getting ready, there will be 200 people in this place. The population density is high enough to make it impossible to see those who are at the other end of the venue.

Because the tables in the back were already crowded, the group of Little Garden decided to stand around the tables near the entrance of the venue.

– How many countries are participating in this operation?

– There are 15 participating organizations in total.

Erika replies to Hayato's doubt.

– However, twelve organizations are dispatching Slayers and those are: Liberian Army, François Army, Rasiyan Army, Weimar Army, Britannia Integrated Army, Indica Army, Guernica Integrated Army, the Qin Empire Army, then come us, the Private Military Companies: Palladian, which is mainly active

in Asian countries, Al-Salaam, which is mainly active in the Middle East and we, Little Garden, operate around Liberia and are the Slayers of Warslan headquarters.

Incidentally, Yamato, the country from which Hayato comes, is said to be participating in the operation. However, they didn't dispatch Slayers. It seems they are performing transport of materials and medical treatment of injured people as logistical support.

– Oh, but if it isn't Fritz?

While they were talking, one of the two young men with a western-style outward appearance suddenly called him out.

Because the national flag on their uniforms belongs to Liberia, apparently those guys are of the Liberian Army.

Fritz gave a loud voice as soon as he looked at the two.

– Michael-senpai, Kane-senpai! Are you both participating in this operation?

That tone of voice sounded as if they were very close, that's what they could immediately understand\*.

\*TN: In fact, Fritz speaks in a formal tone, so I'm not sure if they are that familiar though xd he normally speaks in an informal way.

– Yeah, that's right. After coming out of the dōjō together with Kane and entering the Slayer troops of the Liberian army three years ago——we finally reached the point where we were dispatched to large scale operations like this. By the way, we even slaughtered a lot of Savage already.

Saying that, the blonde hair white young man Michael showed proudly his white teeth. Next, the man with dark hair and dark skin that stands next to him, named Kane, opens his mouth.

– I heard from sensei that you enrolled in Little Garden, so there's no doubt that this year has been the prime of your life, hmm? And going quite early to the battlefield too. Looks like Little Garden is running low of talented people and that their true strength isn't that much either.

Tapping the shoulder of Fritz with one hand, Kane laughs loudly.

– No, that’s...

Maybe that was one of his jokes. Fritz couldn’t understand so. But the cheeks of Fritz twitched. Because Claire is nearby. He also takes a look at her expression with a sidelong glance. Then, without a moment’s delay, Latia cut into the conversation.

– Hey, Kane. Don’t make fun of Little Garden. Here’s why: our ability has increased. We won’t even lose against you now.

\*Humph\*, letting out her breath through her nose, Latia throws out her small chest.

– What, there was a small brat too? She was so small that I didn’t notice her. How someone small like you can fight against the Savage?

– Hey, don’t touch me!

Latia, who was about to be patted on the head by Kane, she dodged his hand in an instant.

It was there that Claire finally opened her mouth.

– Fritz Grantz, Latia Saint-Émillion, are they your acquaintances during your dōjō days desuno?

She squints and glares at the two Slayers.

– Err... well... yeah, our senpais of the dōjō days.

Fritz answered.

Kane, seeing Claire with shining eyes,

– Oh, such a beautiful lady we have here. Why didn’t you introduce us, Fritz? I’m Kane, a Slayer of the Liberian Army—

– Wait a moment, Kane. That woman is...

The expression of Michael who grabbed the shoulder of Kane who took a step forward to Claire was pale and his body was trembling with fear.

– Ah, what is it Michael? Why are you cowering in fear, huh?

– That woman is the Queen of Little Garden!

Michael puts his face close to the ear of Kane and called his attention with a firm yet low tone of voice.

Then, the blood instantaneously draws from the expression of Kane.

– I'm sorry, this guy is spouting nonsense. Come on Kane, apologize!

The hand of Michael pushed his head down and Kane apologized.

– I'm very sorry!

– I'm very sorry!

Immediately after him, Michael also bowed his head.

Although Fritz continued talking with the two cowering men after that, and after a while,

– It seems other acquaintances are over there, so we'll go with these guys for a while, okay?

So, together with Latia, Kane and Michael, he went towards the circle where the Liberian Army was gathered.

– If you think about those two, it's a wise decision, don't you agree?

– They are very concerned about us.

Regarding Erika, Emile shows her consent.

That's what Hayato also noticed.

While talking with Fritz and the others, they were pointing their eyes as if they were peeking the situation, glancing repeatedly this way.

– They seem to be very afraid of the President, but I don't get why...

– That is because Claire-sama is the daughter of the president of Warslan Company.

It was Liddy who answered promptly the doubt of Hayato.

Warslan, who is controlling the defense industry of Liberia, is in a situation where mediations are possible with the Liberian army.

It seems to be considered simple as sent flying the head of a Slayer.



– In addition to that, there are a lot of people inside Liberia saying bad things towards Warslan, like they are snatching excellent Slayers that should be soldiers of Liberia, and that they are manipulating Liberia from behind the scenes. And that Claire-sama's older brother, Juda-sama, who is also the company president of Warslan, is likely to be the next president of the next period.

– Incidentally, there are Slayers of Al-Salaam Company, the PMC of Middle East, over there.

As she's saying so, adding one thing to another, Erika turns her eyes to a certain group.

There are people of darkish skin in that place.

Hayato and the others also turned their eyes to that place.

– In the West and Middle East, although their place of activities is different from us, there's no mistake that they are our competitors.

At that moment, they had the impression that one of the Slayers of Al-Salam noticed their gazes.

– Certainly, their animosities are evident, huh.

Emile reveals her impression.

– Nevertheless, don't cause a fight. We only have to make a display of our ability on the battlefield desu.

Before long, a gray-haired man appeared on the stage, grabbed the microphone and started greeting.

The venue, which was bustling, gets completely silent in an instant.

– I am the commander of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, and the one leading the operation this opportunity, Acel Besançon from François Kingdom. I would like to express my gratitude to the Qin Empire, to each of the troops gathered in this place, to the organizations of Slayers and to all the people involved in this operation.

Following the greeting, the commander tells them that this rally meeting was prepared to deepen the friendship among the armies and organizations.

They noticed that women were appearing in the venue, wearing a red dress that had large cuts in the knees\*, handed down by the Qin Empire.

**\*TN: that's how it's written in the raw: If you are curious or have a better comprehension than me:** 気付けば会場内には、秦帝国に伝わる、膝に大きな切れ込みの入った赤いドレスを着た女性たちが現れていた。

They are holding a tray that had several glasses on it with their hands.

– *Dere's* (There's) a variety of beers, *jyususu* (juices) and *shaoxingjiu*\* wine. Which *uan* (one) will you want?

**\*TN: Chinese alcohol made from rice of glutinous millet.**

They asked them with their local accent.

Though the shape of the glasses were the same, there seemed to be various kinds of drinks inside them.

– We are minors, so alcohol is absolutely prohibited, but you can choose whatever you like other than that *desuwayo*.

– In that case, I'll go with this.

Following the advice of the president, Emily quickly picked up a glass with orange juice.

Hayato also picks the same and turns his eyes to the stage once again.

Acel, the commander, as well as everybody else, received a glass containing frothy foamed beer.

– The sortie will be tomorrow afternoon. Why don't you deepen your friendship to the point that you, the Slayers, will not be affected by the search-and-destroy operation? I sincerely hope you don't overdo it and act carelessly —with that said, let's pray for the success of this joint operation—cheers!

– Cheers!!

Toasting with Emile and the vice presidents who turned their glasses following Acel's shouting, he and the president are the last ones to make a toast.

Dance performed by women of the Qin Empire, accompanied by ethnic music, is developing on the stage in the venue.

– Hmm? The president is drinking wine?

Emile asked so because it looked like the president was drinking wine from the glass.

– It is not masuwa. It contains white grape juice desu.

Answering, Claire continued.

– By the way, I got to know this recently, but your rooms at the hotel are next to each other, correct desuwayone?

– Yes, they are, so what about it?

– I imagine that you understand but visiting each other's room is of course prohibited desuwayo. If that happens, I will have to give you severe punishment masu.

– And why? We aren't doing anything strange.

– I can't trust your words masenwa. Besides, if you weren't doing strange things, then it shouldn't be necessary to visit each other's room desuwayo.

Saying that clearly, Claire turned her back on Emile.

– Then, we will greet the people of the UN Peacekeeping Forces and respond the interviews of the TV stations masuwa. Particularly you, Emile Crossford. Even if people of other countries and organizations say something, you should never get in a fight... understood desuwane?

Making sure of it, Claire went to greet with Liddy and Erika.

– Humph, I know that, you don't have to say those things more than once. Besides, I don't want to stand out too much.

Emile turned her back on Claire, distancing herself, then spat out and turned sulky, and right after that,

– Well then, I'll be off for a while too.

With a complete change and saying that with a cheerful voice, she tried to walk towards the circle of Slayers.

It's there that Hayato grasps her shoulder in a hurry.

– Wait a moment, where are you going so suddenly? Are you going to greet the guys of your country?

She was just told by the President to not be careless.

He doesn't think that she will cause any problem right away, but because he was worried, he thinks that it might be better if he accompanied her.

– That's not it. I definitely don't want to say hello to the Britannia Integrated Army.

– If so, where are you going, huh?

– I'm just going to get some food. So, just wait here with confidence, Hayato. Because I'm going to choose some delicious-looking things!

Hayato sees off Emile who's separating from the table, feeling relieved.

Following that, the other girl who remained in this place opened her mouth.

– Kisaragi-san, I will also go and greet for a minute. There should be friends of mine in the back unit of the Qin Empire's army.

Shuemei also left the table, and Hayato became alone.

(Wha-what do I do...?)

There's only people he doesn't know around him.

He also hesitates to start a conversation.

**\*TN: Why am I being described here?**

Since there's nothing else he can do, he asked the female waitress who happened to pass by if he could get oolong tea to drink, right when Emile was coming back with two round big trays on her hands.

– Thanks for waiting, Hayato.

– Yeah, welcome back.

Honestly, he was grateful that she was coming back this fast.

Emile puts the trays cramped with dishes that had a lot of food on the table.

Hayato decides to receive the oolong tea of Emile from the female waitress who's serving them.

This as thanks for going and getting food.

– Well then, shall we eat?

Emile loosened her mouth so much, to the point that she looked like she was drooling, looking at the dishes placed on the table.

Hayato begins to prepare gyoza\* for two people using a small dish placed in the center of the table and seasonings like soy sauce, chili oil and vinegar.

**\*TN: Japanese dish consisting of dumplings typically filled with ground meat and vegetables and grilled or fried.**

– Here.

– Thanks.

In response, she pierced the gyoza with a fork, dipping it into the tare\* she received and put it into her mouth.

**\*TN: sauce for dipping, made from soy sauce, mirin, vinegar and dashi.**

Chopsticks are also provided, but the western people like Emile weren't very good at it, so she ate the gyoza with a fork.

– Uwaa, this is a real gyoza, it's delicious.

Emile looks happy, enough to relax her cheeks with a slovenly appearance.

Hayato also grabbed the gyoza with chopsticks and put it into his mouth.

– Oh, it's true. It's very good.

Not only the gyoza.

Yodare\* chicken and sugatani\* of shark's fin, yakuzen\* soup and so on, it was impossible for the dishes to not be super delicious, so Emile is eating them very satisfactorily.

**\*TN: Yodare means drool, something like “saliva chicken” appears when looking on the internet. Sugatani means seafood cooked in a way that preserves its original shape and yakuzen is medicinal cooking based on traditional Chinese medicine.**

– This Peking duck is also deliciou~s. The food of Qin Empire is the best.

Emile carries the food one after another into her stomach.

Going beyond the admiration, her impetus was enough to leave him astonished.

– You sure eat properly, huh...?

– Because this is to replenish *energy*, you know.

– Even if you say that, we haven’t used *sense energy* recently so...

Hayato smiled bitterly and,

– Emilia-sama!

There, a suddenly voice called her out.

It’s a woman’s voice.

– Eh...?

The movement of Emile stops.

Hayato does the same.

(Did she say **Emilia** right now?)

That’s the real name of Emile Crossford who is eating with Hayato.

When Hayato turned his eyes towards the one who gave that voice, he saw a girl with bobbed, light brown hair that is rushing over to where they are.

She’s short, has a baby face, but is wearing a blue uniform.

She belongs to the Integrated Army of Britannia.

– Uh-oh...

Like Hayato, Emile, who saw the appearance of the girl, raised her voice, and put the fork and knife in a panic on the table.

Looking at her, Hayato thought.

(Does this mean that she's an acquaintance of **Emilia** in Gudenburg?)

He wonders so, since it's very probable due to the uniform.

If that's the case, then this is very problematic.

Only Hayato, the president and the vice presidents, those four people, the members of Little Garden, know that Emile Crossford is actually a woman and that her name is Emilia Hermit.

There are a lot of people apart from them in that place.

– Let's run away, Hayato.

As a matter of course, and in the blink of an eye, Emile turned her back on the girl that is heading this way, so she tries to walk towards the exit of the rally place, but it was too late to move.



— I wanted to meet you, Emilia-sama——!



The girl clung tightly to the back of Emile.

– Emilia-sama, Emilia-sama, Emilia-sama!

The girl is rubbing her upper body against the body of Emile like a dog.

– Stop, and I don't know such Emilia. My name is Emile Crossford!

Emile tries desperately to pull apart the body of the girl, but she doesn't give up.

Naturally, the gazes of their surroundings were directed to Emile and the girl.

*What's happening over there?* Some people came close to them.

– What are you saying? Even if you look like a man, even if you are saying something to me like “Boku”, even if it were a relative of Emilia-sama, these eyes of mine, her disciple, cannot be deceived!

– Argh fine but be quiet!

– Ngh, gg, ngh ~ ~ ~ !

Emile rapidly closed the mouth of the girl.

– Let's get away from this place for now. I want to talk calmly in a place where there's nobody. Hayato, come with us.

– O-okay...

Emile was also noticing the surrounding eyes.

Certainly, it's risky to be in this place.

They don't know that there's a girl in front of their eyes, but it's obvious that this will get way worse if they keep talking in this place.

– Claudia, you are coming with me, right?

– Of course, since it is a request of Emilia-sama!

– I'm telling you, don't call me Emilia!

Thus, Hayato decided to leave the venue of the rally meeting with Emile Crossford aka Emilia Hermit and the mysterious girl named Claudia.



– ... so, what do you want?

Hayato and the girls asked the soldiers of the UN Peacekeeping Forces to drive them in a car, with that, they returned to the town area, and by following the proposal of Emile whose stomach wasn't full yet, they entered a small restaurant.

For the time being, the staff are in the venue, and they think that this place is better than the hotel where they can be asked by their acquaintances, therefore making the story even more complicated.

– Well, even if you say “what I want”, my name is Kisaragi Hayato and— —

– Hayato is my classmate in my Little Garden.

Emile complemented, extending her hand to Hayato who answers while being embarrassed.

– So, Claudia. Before asking a person for their name, you should give your name first.

– If Emilia-sama says so...

Then, Claudia clears her throat with a cough and,

– I am Claudia Lowetti. I am a Slayer belonging to the Imperial Army of Britannia and the childhood friend of Emilia-sama.

– Childhood friend?

– I just taught her how to use the Hundred for just a minute in Gudenburg. Before that, we only met here and there for a few seconds.

While Emile supplemented so, the ordered goods arrived.

Everyone had the same, chilling tantanmen\*

**\*TN: Szechuan dish of noodles covered with a sauce of sesame paste and chili oil.**

Its appearance is different from the common tantanmen seen in Yamato, as it

has no juice. It has noodles mixed with minced meat, green onions as vegetables and seasoned with spicy sauce; it's similar to a mazesoba\*

**\*TN: literally mixed noodles.**

– Thanks for the food.

And, Emile slurps the noodles.

Hayato and Claudia also began to slurp the noodles.

Even though he ate a fairly quantity at the venue of the rally meeting, the spiciness of the noodles stimulates his appetite, fitting into the stomach of Hayato one after another.

Four chairs are on the square table.

Emile is on the front of Hayato across the table and Claudia is sitting diagonally to the right of him.

– Nevertheless, Claudia joined the army, and came to this joint operation, yes?

– It's thanks to Emilia-sama who trained me that I joined the army. Because of that, I volunteered myself for this operation.

Claudia continued, stopping her hand and the slurping.

– In fact, since the figure of Emilia-sama disappeared from Gudenburg, I was always looking for her whereabouts. At that time, I caught sight of a bulletin board on the *cybernet* about a rumor of a Slayer using a phantasmagoric weapon when fighting the Savage in the Zwei Islands—

– I see, so that's the reason.

Emile sighs profoundly.

– It was then when I understood. That's definitely Emilia-sama.

Apparently, someone who was in the Zwei Islands and was watching the fighting style of Emile, wrote information about it on the *net's* bulletin board that such person was using a strange Hundred from Little Garden.

There, Hayato remembered what he heard at that time, about that conversation with Sakura.

Sakura has a video of Hayato.

Claudia found her way to Emile with the bulletin board.

Hayato thinks that the *net* is truly terrifying.

– I investigated information of Little Garden after that. The intelligence department of the Kingdom of Gudenburg also moved.

– The intelligence department you say...

– ... that is to say, the country is seriously searching for me, isn't it?

– Exactly. The disappearance of the hidden princess, Emilia Gudenburg, hasn't been made public yet, so that's why Gudenburg wanted to deal secretly with this.

– \*Spits out\*!

Hayato spouts out the water that was contained in his mouth without thinking, being choked by that.

– Hayato, are you okay!?

– Ye-yeah...

*Cough Cough*, while still coughing, Hayato replied.

There's something he wants to ask more than anything.

– More importantly, what does she mean with «hidden princess»...?

– Err... well... I'm sorry...

Laughing with a "ahaha", Emile hung her head.

– Why are you saying sorry...?

– To be honest, I've been keeping something in secret from Hayato in the last 10 years.

– Eh...?

*Ba-dump*, his heart beats fast.

From some time ago, he had been suspecting that Emilia kept something in secret.

Then, that secret was the story about her being a 《hidden princess》?

– Hayato, will you listen to me?

– Ye-yeah...

Hayato nodded after swallowing spit.

Gazing firmly at the face of Hayato, Emile opens her mouth.

– The name that I gave you at that time, Emilia Hermit, is not my real name. My real name is Emilia Gutenberg.

– Emilia Gutenberg...?

– It's the same name as the country of Gutenberg, and the family name of the royalty. That means that I'm descending from the King of Gutenberg.

– Then that means that, you are a “princess” ...?

Emile nods.

It seems she is the 《hidden princess》.

– ... hahaha, I thought that you were a daughter of a high-class family from the dress at that time, but, to think that you are indeed a princess...

Hayato could do nothing else but to laugh like that.

To think that he was enjoying himself with the princess of Gutenberg...

– But, even if I'm saying that I'm the “princess” and the third one, I was robbed of the name of Gutenberg and I was given the name of Hermit, so I don't think it's a big deal.

– Emilia-sama, that is...

The expression of Claudia turns depressed.

– It's fine, since I'll tell everything to Hayato on this occasion.

– ... tell you say? There's more?

– Kisaragi Hayato, do you know that the Federation of Britannia consists of

four countries, yes?

It was Claudia who asked that question.

– The Kingdom of Gudenburg, the Kingdom of Scotia, the Kingdom of Wenz and the Kingdom of Alicia, right? I was taught that in elementary school and I also studied it by looking at the map before going to Little Garden.

– ... if so, you also know that the relationships between those four countries is basically bad, don't you?

– I've learned a bit about it in world history classes. Certainly, the war over 300 years ago has left some traces, correct?

– Affirmative. If you know that much, then you also know that the Kingdom of Wenz is really on bad terms with Gudenburg, no?

– No, I didn't know to that extent, but...

– The Kingdom of Gudenburg, the Kingdom of Scotia and the Kingdom of Alicia were invaded by those who came from the continent before the medieval times and created a country. On the other hand, the Kingdom of Wenz is a country of people that inherited the blood of the natives who lived on the island of Britannia, so their races were different from the start.

– That's why the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Wenz are people that respect their traditions and the customs of the aboriginals, unlike the people of the other three countries. In other words, they are the inhabitants of the old Britannia Island.

Emile added so.

Subsequently, Claudia opens her mouth again.

– But because of that, they failed to keep up with the industrial revolution that happened in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and now they are being despised by the other three countries, they are being told things like barbarians, bumpkins, *etc.*

– They did massive killings of aborigines, even though the barbarians they drove away were themselves.

Emile spat out that out of nowhere.

– It's unusual for the princess of Gudenburg to speak and stand from the side of Wenz. Why is that?

At any rate, when talking about Wenz, Emile was showing strange emotions, she seemed to be angry and then delightful.

– That's because, as a matter of fact, my mother was born in Wenz.

With that said, that she was born in Wenz is unusual, and the reason is that she was attending the university of Gudenburg. During that time, she met Granald Gudenburg, who was the prince of Gudenburg, and fell in love.

However, their love wasn't allowed, of course. Because Prince Granald had a fiancé, the Princess of the Kingdom of Scotia.

– Even so, my father continued his friendship with my mother in secrecy and gave birth to me. It seems that every one of the royal families, as well as the higher-ups, were at a complete loss. Fundamentally because it's no good for the Kingdom of Gudenburg to have a child that is tied together with a woman of the Kingdom of Wenz, due to the right of blood of Gudenburg.

Therefore, the girl that was born was named Emilia by them, and together with her mother, were confined in a residence in the outskirts of Gudenburg.

– After that, the health of my mother got worse and passed away, so I was taken back to the central part of Gudenburg, but I was also confined there. Still, I could go outside freely to a certain extent. It was then that I met Hayato.

– But, wait a moment. The royalty of Gudenburg wanted to hide the existence of Emilia, right? Then, it's necessary for you to bring her back, correct?

– ... it is just as you said.

It was Claudia who answered with a mysterious expression.

– Right now, Emilia-sama is in a politically important position. I don't want to do it, but it's for her own sake...

While looking at her, the facial expression of Emile also became gloomy.

Wondering what is happening here, Hayato swallowed saliva.

– If it becomes to this, then it's fine if you want to talk about the matter in

question.

- I said we were going to tell everything, right?
- Understood, if that's the case, then I will talk.

Claudia began to talk again after receiving the reply of Emile.

– As a matter of fact, when it comes to Slayers, the people of the Kingdom of Wenz have more of them than Gudenburg and the other two Kingdoms. It is said that the primary factor for that are the big fragments of meteorites that fell into the Kingdom of Wenz during the *First Attack*.

Therefore, now the position of the Kingdom of Wenz is strengthening among the major four countries that form Britannia.

Thereupon, Hayato remembered what the president said before, and that is related to this story: [The change of the power balance of the world due to the Slayers]

– So, the Kingdom of Gudenburg is thinking of strengthening the relationship between them and Wenz by marrying the third Prince of Wenz and Emilia-sama who has blood of Wenz and who is also an excellent Slayer. If the Kingdom does so, it will be in a more politically superior position than the other three countries, and the Kingdom of Gudenburg can acquire a lot of Slayers. It is a relationship where both win. That's why this plan achieves even more prosperity and stability to Britannia, don't you agree?

- But, I don't care in the slightest such a thing.

Suddenly, Emile spat out something like that.

– Isn't the worst, to suddenly try and take charge of me, when they dealt with me as if I was an unwanted child until now, because my utility value has "grown"? Aside from that, no one will listen to my opinion.

– I also share that opinion. The matter with the Prince of Wenz is, to be honest, the opposite. However, all that Emilia-sama has to do is to return to Gudenburg. If the person who has the blood of Wenz is in Gudenburg, then the negotiations with Wenz, and the relationship between each other will...

- I already said that I don't care in the slightest such a thing. Both Britannia



and Gudenburg, I simply don't care, okay?

– Then, please return for me.

– ...eh?

– I love Emilia-sama.

– No, Claudia... what are you saying...

– Because, Emilia-sama is the only one who has never look down on me. Besides raising me as the Slayer I am now...

– But that's an overestimation of Claudia towards me. I just wanted to practice my Hundred, so I merely wanted a person to keep me company.

– Umm, what are you talking about?

Hayato throws a question, because this was incomprehensible to him.

– Actually, I was practicing together with Claudia while I was secretly receiving teachings about how to use the Hundred from Charlotte.

– I wasn't good at exercising, my reaction value of the Hundred wasn't high, so I dropped out from the dōjō and Emilia-sama tempered me thoroughly until I joined the army.

– But, that was because I also wanted to practice myself. Moreover, Claudia is a girl of the house who's a relative of the royal family, and who knew about me...

– Notwithstanding, I am grateful. Instead of secretly doing practice of the Hundred, you taught me how to use the Hundred. I truly believe that meeting you was like a miracle. Coincidentally, I met Emilia-sama while practicing at night...

– As for me, I was surprised because I didn't expect at all to get to know someone who would come to practice at night so...

Emile sighs deeply.

– But I'm grateful. I really am. From the bottom of my heart. For this reason, I wanted to serve Emilia-sama. And In order to do that, I joined the army to get stronger, so Emilia-sama could spend her days easier, trying to reform

Gutenberg...

– I realized the readiness of Claudia.

– If so, will you come back to Gutenberg? And then, together with me in Gutenberg——

– No, I can't do that. At any rate, I like Hayato as much as I think Claudia likes me. So, I'm not returning to Gutenberg. Tell that to the royal family as well.

– Hey, wait...

– In other words, because of that man, Emilia-sama says that she will not return to Gutenberg, yes?

Claudia stares at Hayato.

– Hey, I'm not saying that.

– If so, Kisaragi Hayato, let's wager Emilia-sama with a duel——

– ... huh?

*Clatter*, the emptied porcelain bowl made a sound on the table.

Claudia stood up and points her index finger to Hayato.

He feels that he has the memory of having done this somehow, so he remembered that he was challenged to a duel by Claire in the middle of the entrance ceremony.

– Don't "huh" me, Kisaragi Hayato. If I win, I will bring Emilia-sama back to Gutenberg. But in case you win the match, then Emilia-sama will stay here.

– it's troubling that you are saying such a thing to me. Besides, I don't understand the development of this anymore...

– It's a simple story. Emilia-sama seems to be mortified for falling in love with you.

– Well, falling in love you say...?

– Am I wrong?

– Um, I'm falling in love.

Emilia smiles carelessly.

– Hold on a second, why are you adding fuel to the fire!?

– It's fine, I like how this is flowing.

Emile muttered with a small voice into the ear of Hayato.

He has no idea what she meant.

Maybe what she was saying is that she will become submissive once he shows off his true strength?

– I understand, Kisaragi Hayato. If that's the case, let me show you how good-for-nothing and powerless you are, pulling you out of the heart of Emilia-sama.

– Umm, calm down a bit. We are going to participate in the operation starting tomorrow, right? We'll exhaust our *energy* if we have a duel now. We even were prohibited by the President to use it so...

– Of course, I also have a good idea. Do you know if there's a Slayer's gym\* in this town?

**\*TN: Kanji said dōjō, furigana said gym.**

– I know one, but...

– Then, there is no problem. In every gym there should be practice weapons of the same shape as the 100 kinds of weapons which are the basic forms of the Hundred. Let's have a battle with those. There will be one rule. How about having a battle that is transmitted from the medieval times in the Kingdom of Gudenburg, which is the victory for giving a blow with the weapon? It goes without saying that we won't use *sense energy*.

– Certainly, that won't have an impact on you for the operation from tomorrow.

– That may be true but...

– Hayato, accept the match.

– What?

– If it's Hayato, I'm sure you can win.

– Even if you say I can win, isn't that a problem?

Emile brings near her face to the ear of the bewildered Hayato.

– Listen, Hayato. This is a good opportunity. If Hayato wins, let's make Claudia to promise us to never come back again.

– I see...

He can comprehend the thinking of Emile.

But, can he really win?

– How's her skill?

– Well, taking into consideration that is higher when comparing it to the time when I taught her, I suppose that her skill is a bit lower than Fritz and Latia.

– Then, that's no good, I guess?

At any rate, those two aren't Variant, and their skill was enough to let them enter *Selections*, despite being first-years.

– But, if you don't use *energy*, you have more chances to win. No, if it's Hayato, the victory is completely yours. Hayato is definitely above her physical ability, and after going back to Yamato from Gudenburg, you were doing kendo, right? Besides, Hayato has *that*.

– ... Emilia-sama, what are you talking so secretly?

Claudia glares at them.

That made Emile stop her ongoing conversation.

– So, Kisaragi Hayato. Are you up to the challenge?

Hayato looks at the face of Emile.

It was written on it that her answer was yes.

– ... I'll do it.

If it's about Emile winning, then perhaps she has some reasons for that... probably. Surely. He wants to believe so\*.

**\*TN: I can't understand the very first part of the sentence. The kanji for victory/win**

goes directly as an action performed by Emile. エミールが勝てるというのならば、それなりの理由があるのだろう.....たぶん。きっと。そう信じたい。

— Then, let's fight immediately. I'm sure the place of the dōjō is—

Claudia picked out the PDA from her pocket.

She launches the map *app* and confirms its location.

— Come to think of it, Emilia-sama, you have changed all your contact details. Could you please tell me your new phone number and email address?

— Once again, I'm not Emilia, here I'm Emile Crossford. So don't call me "Emilia". And I'm not telling you my number.

When Emile said so, the expression of Claudia became instantaneously grim.

— Well then, please tell me about them if I win the fight against Kisaragi Hayato.

— Fine. Only if you win.

— I have identified the location, so let's go.

Claudia started walking to lead Emile and Hayato, but she immediately turned around, looking at Hayato,

— Kisaragi Hayato, I will definitely win.

While walking towards the dōjō, Hayato asked Emile, with an almost whispering voice.

— ... so, which are the reasons that I can win?

— Hayato is a Variant, and Claudia is a regular Slayer. Hayato has become able to activate freely the ability of the Variant in the past week. So you can definitely win if you use it. In other words, this isn't even a duel.

— Isn't even a duel, you say—

He understands the words of Emile, but there are too much things to be involved with.

— That means that she has no idea about me being a Variant?

— I haven't talked about that with her, that goes for the ordinary people and

the Slayers too, since only a handful of people know about the Variants.

– Oh, I see...

– I have the feeling that it will be difficult for her to get into it. As for me, I think it's a good idea, like killing two birds with a stone.

– After all, you are a little sly, isn't it? But if I activate the ability of the Variant, then the amount of consumption of *energy* will rise above basal metabolism. It's the same as using *energy*, right?

– But the amount of *energy* used in a portion of the metabolism is different from person to person. In my case, it's considerable higher than most people. Because that portion only increases, I don't mess with it while using it. If it's triggered for only an instant, then it shouldn't be significantly consumed, and with a night's sleep you should be fine.

– Effectively you could say that but...

– What? Then Hayato is saying that it's fine for me to go back to Gudenburg?

– I didn't say anything like that...

After a while, they saw the dōjō for Slayers.

It's a wooden building, it looked like the kendo hall where Hayato attended.

At the entrance door, a girl is cleaning with a broom.

It's Mei Fan, one of the two people who met by chance with Shuemei at noon.

It looks like she noticed the presence of Hayato and the others, since she's quickly bowing and raising her head.

– Greetings, we haven't seen since noon. Did something happen that you are in this place?

It was Emile who answered that question.

– Actually, we have a small request.

– ... a request?

– If it's fine with you, can you let us use the ring, please?

– Eh...?

Towards Mei Fan who is perplexed, Emile began to talk about the duel that Hayato and Claudia have. Naturally, they aren't going to use their Hundred.

– If that is the case, I think that there are no issues even if there is no permission from the teachers or the dōjō head but.... I will ask Bakuei who is cleaning inside.

Bakuei is the name of the boy they met during midday.

Mei Fan rushed into the dōjō and came back right away.

– Bakuei said if you do not use your Hundred, it should not be a problem. There is nobody aside from us here now, so please do not worry about anything.

Hayato and the girls set foot into the dōjō, following the lead of Mei Fan.

The interior is the same as the exterior, it definitely looks like a kendo hall. A white boundary line of around 5 meters by 5 meters is drawn on the wooden floor. That's where the match will take place.

– The armory is this way.

They move to the armory with the guide of Mei Fan.

Even though there were imitations made entirely from wood, there was a variety of swords and spears, as well as things like guns and bullets, everything was crammed and cramped.

– The amount is amazing...

It was Bakuei who's hearing by chance the murmur of Hayato and knitted his brows.

– What, how can you be so surprised with this?

If you are a Slayer, then you should be saying that you have seen this much already.

Mei Fan, looking flustered, hit the head of Bakuei.

– Bakuei! Do not utter discourtesy to the Slayers!

\*Slap\*, a violent sound echoes.

– Kisaragi-san, I really lament the impoliteness that was uttered by Bakuei.

And, Mei Fan bowed deeply her head.

– You too Bakuei, lower your head properly.

– I’m sorry...

Urged by Mei Fan, Bakuei bowed his head.

– No, don’t worry about that, raise your head. And to be honest, it’s my first time coming to a place like this.

– Does that mean that Kisaragi-san is not from a dōjō?

– I was attending a dōjō where I was doing kendo, but I didn’t attend one related to the Hundred.

– And yet, you are participating in the search-and-destroy operation of the Savage, correct? Just like Shuemei-nee-chan said, you are truly amazing.

The eyes of Bakuei that are looking at Hayato changed to a gaze of envy.

Looking that, Emile said very contented,

– Yup, Hayato is amazing.

– Hey, don’t say unnecessary things...

– Take it easy.

– Oh! I’ve found a weapon that suits me well.

While Hayato was having a talk with the youngsters, Claudia, who continued searching in the storehouse, seemed to have found a weapon she uses.

What she has in her hand is something that has a sphere at the end of the chain— it’s something that looks like a hammer throw, the ones found at the track-and-field events.

. That resembles the form of your Hundred?

– Exactly. My Hundred is a Crusher type. The form of the weapon is a hammer. So, Kisaragi Hayato, what’s the form and weapon of your Hundred?

– My Hundred is a Chevalier type, the weapon is a sword.



While answering, Hayato picked up a bamboo sword.

– Are you okay with that? Compared to *Hien*, it's quite small and thin...

Emile was showing an expression that said *Why don't you pick a bigger sword, huh?*

Certainly, in this storehouse there's a metal fake sword that resembles the shape of *Hien* rather than the bamboo sword.

But Hayato **intentionally** chose the bamboo sword.

– In Yamato I used this for the practice of fencing, so I'm fine with it.

– ... if so, it's your choice. I don't want any complaints after this.

Hayato grasped tightly the bamboo sword, and left the storehouse with Claudia, then moved to the match ring.

– Are you really sure? Even the length of the weapon is quite short compared to *Hien*...

Emile looks very worried.

Maybe he only gives his all when his life is on the line?

– Yeah, I'm really sure.

Hayato replied with confidence, and like Claudia, he moved to the ring, they are facing each other with a distance of about 3 meters.

(As expected, the bamboo sword doesn't fit in my hands, but *Hien* isn't easy to use either...)

He remembered when he was bending and stretching, just before he started practicing kendo.

I want to become strong.

To not lose my important people.

To never be apart from them again.

Hayato took the bamboo sword in one of his hands, because of the *Second Attack* that occurred in Gudenburg.

The sudden encounter of the Savage.

Separating from the girl he was worried about.

And now, in order to protect the girl of that time, he decided to do it like this, by taking a bamboo sword— —

– ... why are you laughing?

– No, it's nothing.

Even though it's different from the form he was imagining, that time is definitely connected to the present.

There's no way that he could say such an embarrassing thing, but he thought that what he has done so far it hasn't been for nothing, and so, his mouth spontaneously relaxed.

Besides, he smiles till here.

From here on, he must become serious.

– I'm curious about it, but it's okay. Well then, shall we start the match?

– Yeah, let's do it.

Hayato readies the bamboo sword in an overhead position.

It's his first time in a long time doing this stance.

When looking towards Claudia who's standing in front of him, she began to spin the wooden sphere with the movement of her arm.

– Boy, can you give the start?

– Ah, yes!

Replying, Bakuei straightened his hand towards the ceiling.

– Welll then— —start!

At the same time Bakuei swung downward the arm, the match started, but neither Hayato nor Claudia moved.

They are fixedly staring at each other.

– Aren't you coming?

Claudia said in order to provoke him.

Still, Hayato doesn't move.

– If you don't come, then I'll go towards you!

It's Claudia who got tired of waiting and rushed out.

– How about this, Kisaragi Hayato!

He dodged with a back step the hammer that was released from overhead towards the ground, but Claudia advances a step further and started to attack in succession, drawing a cross-like shape from left to right.

Hayato dodged it while rolling horizontally.

– Kuh, this guy is quick!

She shouts with frustration, but her attack doesn't stop there.

Hayato avoided it and steps forwards, then Claudia sweeps down the hammer again.

Hayato crouched down, rolls horizontally like he did moments ago and avoids the hammer.

And then, he tries to slash at the body of Claudia that is full of gaps.

– It's not enough!

– Wha...!!

The bamboo sword was heavily weighted.

While looking at it, the chain is wrapped around the bamboo sword.

Claudia coiled the chain around it, using the centrifugal force thanks to the weight of the wooden ball.

– What's wrong? You can't move with this?

*Jari*, the chain makes a sound.

**\*TN: Tbh, I don't know what sound is that. I have no reference with the kana alone.**

In that situation, the body of Hayato approaches Claudia.

Otherwise, the bamboo sword would break, so he couldn't go against her.

(Dammit, what do I do...?)

If this continues, Claudia will do as she pleases.

– This is the end, Kisaragi Hayato!

– Kkh...!

The chain sounds for a second time.

The bamboo sword makes a creaking sound without breaking, and his body looks like is about to float.

Thereupon, the chain was suddenly loosened.

– Uwaah!

Hayato lost his balance due to the sudden pace and falls on his backside on the floor.

Of course, Hayato stands up, but Claudia won't wait for him to adjust his stance.

– This is it!

She has the intention to decide the match here.

Shouting, Claudia raised high overhead the wooden ball.

(If it has come to this, it can't be helped....)

He wanted to win without the ability of the Variant if possible, but he's not in a situation where he can say such a thing.

If he loses, he will be separated from Emile.

(...I'm against that... so...!)

This moment is when he activated the ability of the Variant.

He seems to appeal to himself and,

——*Ba-dump!*

His heart beat fast.

In a split second, the eyes of Hayato changed from black to golden color and began to release an intense brilliance.

The scenery in front of the eyes of Hayato changed completely.

His field of vision isn't gold-colored.

The movement of everything became slow, so not only Claudia, but also the children, Emile and the movement of the approaching wooden ball can be perceived completely with his eyes.

He senses that 1 second became 30 seconds.

And still, the speed of his movement doesn't change.

Hayato stood up, making sure to straighten up his back, then swung the bamboo sword horizontally to the half of the top and bottom of her body, towards the torso of Claudia.

**\*TN: This sentence was SO DAMN HARD to understand, that I still think I'm wrong. Again, if you are curious about it, here's the fragment:** 背筋を伸ばすようにして立ち上がったハヤトは、クラウディアの胴に向かって、身体を上下に真っ二つにするように、水平に竹刀を振るった。

At the same time, the world returns to its original speed as well as the response of the victory transmitted from both arms.

The color of the eyes of Hayato also returned from golden to their original black.

– ...ah.

Claudia falls with a thud on the floor while leaking a small scream from her mouth.

– The match has ended!

Bakuei shouted, with the hand stretched to the ceiling.

– Yay, as expected of Hayato!

He guesses she couldn't endure the joy.

Emile jumped to Hayato who's taking a breath.

– Hey, stop it, the kids are looking at us with weird eyes!

The face of Hayato turns deep red and pulls her body apart.

– Ah, I’m sorry. It’s just...

\*Ahaha\*, while rubbing her head, she brought her lips close to the ear of Hayato and whispered.

– It seems like it went smoothly, isn’t it?

– That’s true, but...

Hayato points his eyes to Claudia who’s groaning on the floor.

– ... are you okay?

Hayato extended his hand, approaching Claudia.

However, she never grabbed it.

On the contrary, she glares at Hayato,

– ...you can’t stand by yourself without borrowing your strength!

Saying that, she stood up.

Drops of tears can be seen on the corner of her eyes.

– ... about what we discussed, Claudia. Don’t think that you can try to take me back to Gudenburg from now on.

Emile asserts mercilessly, as if to destroy any possible hopes,

– No!

Claudia replied, turning her face away.

– What do you mean with “no”? That’s not what you promised!

– Because Kisaragi Hayato is a sneaky person!

– Eh?

– A sneaky person?

A surprised expression appears on the facial expression of Emile and Hayato.

They thought that maybe she found out that he used the ability of the Variant, but it seems that that’s not the case.

– I don't get it but, he was weird!

Claudia shouted and continued her words.

– Otherwise, I wouldn't have lost to you.

– No, that...

It wasn't because she discovered that he used the ability of the Variant, but because she just doesn't want to admit that she has lost.

The fact that she doesn't understand properly the situation, they don't know if that's convenient or not.

– I will absolutely expose your cunning deeds. Time is necessary for that. So, postpone the result of this duel until then!

Page 155

– Ah, hey!

– Claudia!

*Criiiiiiiiiieeeeees*, with a crying voice, Claudia jumped out of the dōjō.

– In short, that means I didn't win the match now?

Emile murmured with a bewildered appearance.

– You did use the ability of the Variant, and what she was saying isn't mistaken, so...

– I feel that this has become even more troublesome somehow.

– To begin with, it's your fault. You said that I had to accept the duel.

– Um, but I thought that I could stay forever by the side of Hayato with this ...

Murmuring in a small voice so that she couldn't be heard by Bakuei or Mei Fan, Emile sighed profoundly.

# Chapter 3: Operation Begins *Feelings of Claire Jamming*

The very day of the beginning of the operation. After lunch, the Slayers changed their clothes to their Variable Suits and gathered at the base camp set in the wilderness.

– Well then, I will stay here. I will be praying for your safety.

Unlike Hayato and the others, Shuemei sent them out, and is wearing the uniform of Little Garden Martial Arts Department like yesterday.

She's being stationed at this base during the operation as it was decided that she will do logistical support with members of Warslan's communication unit that came along from Little Garden.

– Of course that we are going to come back safely. Don't you think so, Hayato?

– Yeah.

Prompted by Emile, Hayato nodded firmly.

Shuemei shows a relieved smile towards the usual sight.

Continuing, Claire opened her mouth.

– Ryu Shuemei—although you are going to remain <here> in this base, you are a Slayer member of Little Garden desu. Please firmly grasp the state of our vitality, the remaining amount of our *sense energy* and the progress of the strategy masuwa.

– Yes!

– Good answer desu. Precisely because we have a logistical support unit, we the frontline troops can fight with confidence desu. You are not going to fight directly but comprehending the battle with the Savage on the battlefield should be a great asset for your future desuwa.

Parting with Shuemei, Hayato and co. aligned at the place where the rally was



held last night.

There's no need to say that there are no dishes, chairs or tables, only the air strained with bottles is here.

Hayato was a bit nervous due to the suddenly change in the atmosphere.

Both Latia and Fritz are the same.

Their faces are stiff.

When all the organizations have finished forming a line, the commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, Acyl Besançon, appeared on the stage, greeting at the rally.

– I will be informing the brave Slayers about the details of the 《Operation: Bird in Cage》that we will be carrying out from now on.

What was told by Acyl is that the fifty Slayers in this place are divided into 10 teams and 2 of those 10 teams will be standing by at the base and are going to be sent to the neighboring villages when the Savage appear and will be dispatched to the location of a team that have fallen into a critical situation.

The remaining 8 teams are deployed so as to surround Mt. Kongur and Mt. Kunlun, and each of them will move to their place of destination. While taking a rest, they will explore the surroundings. They will descend the mountain by the night of the next day and will return.

The team divisions are already done by the UN Peacekeeping Forces who are taking command of this operation.

It's to ensure that no organization loses, and yet, it seems that Slayers of more than two countries are expected to be included in a team.

– Does that mean that Hayato won't be in the same team as me? I haven't heard anything about that discussion, but...

– It was decided at the lunch meeting yesterday desu. I told Fritz and Latia after the rally, but I didn't tell you since you came back first deshitawane.

It was a thorny way of speaking, like blaming the two of them, but Claire knows the circumstances about why Hayato and Emilia slipped out of the rally.

Last night, while Hayato was returning to the hotel from the dōjō, Claire noticed that they weren't in the venue and made a phone call to ask the reasons for acting without permission.

At that time, Emile talked about Claudia to Claire.

Although Hayato didn't know, in the interrogation that was done after the secret that Emile Crossford is Emilia Hermit was leaked out at the time of the first sortie, Emile told Claire that she was the third princess of Gudenburg.

Therefore, she was able to understand their circumstances right away.

– But, why do we need a team? And a combination team—

– Because it depends on the ability of the Slayer according to the organization, you see? And because it has the nuance of monitoring.

It's Erika who answered that.

– ... monitoring?

*What's that?* Emilia cocks her head in puzzlement.

– The remuneration for the search-and-destroy operation of the Savage carried by the UN Peacekeeping Forces is divided among the war results of the participating countries. Each Slayer comes to this place on behalf of their country or organization. In other words, some may try to sacrifice other countries and increase their achievements. There may be a possibility of manipulating the number of Savages that they slaughter. They may hide them and bring them back to their countries without reporting the cores of the Savages and the *Variable Stones* they acquire in the operation. It's to prevent such things.

– Although they are affiliated with the UN, they aren't monoliths, huh...

– Exactly.

– So, are Hayato and I in the same team? It's important to know that.

– That's something we don't know. That's going to be announced now.

With the words of Liddy, Hayato and the others turned their eyes on the stage again and a man with several sheets of paper on his hands appeared on the

stage and replaced Acyl, the commander.

He informs that he's the deputy commander and starts announcing the team divisions.

A team is a team mainly composed by the Army of the Qin Empire.

B team is a team mainly composed by the Army of the Empire of Rasiya.

C team is a team mainly composed by the Army of Liberia.

D team is a team mainly composed by the Slayers of Al-Salaam

(I hope to be with Hayato, I hope to be with Hayato...)

Emile was praying, piling up her hands in front of her chest.

— Next is E team. Kisaragi Hayato from Little Garden—

The moment he was called, Hayato showed a surprised reaction.

— Next, Emile Crossford.

The moment she was called, the expression of Emile became bright in a flash.

But, it quickly turned into a grim one.

It's because the deputy commander announced the names of Claire and Erika.

It looks like the hopes of Emile wasn't completely definite, since E team is formed almost entirely by Little Garden.

— And finally, from the Empire of Britannia, Claudia Lowetti.

— Eh...

Following Emile who opened her mouth without thinking, apart from Latia and Fritz who don't know the circumstances at all—Claire, Liddy, Erika and Hayato showed a troubled look.

Hayato found the figure of Claudia out of the many Slayers, looking at his surroundings.

The moment the line of sight of Hayato and Claudia overlapped, Claudia shows a sinister-like smile.

She looked like she was saying that she can recover from the front of the

promise of the duel of yesterday.

– Even though I’m finally with Hayato, why do I have to be together with Claudia...

Emile murmured spontaneously.

– I wonder if we can change the division of the team somehow...

– I think that it is impossible already masuwayo. Good thing is that both Erika and I are in the same team with you desuwane.

What Claire meant to say is that with these members, the possibility that the real identity of Emile is found out is low.

– That may be so, but it’s still a hindrance...

– ... did you say something?

– No, not at all.

From there, the announcement of team divisions continues.

Fritz, Latia and Liddy were assigned to F team all together. A girl, Aly Harlech of Al Salaam and Wendy Velvet of the Army of Liberia joined them, totaling 5 people.

Four girls and one man, the gender composition it’s same as the team of Hayato.

– If it wasn’t for the battle, this does really looks like a harem, don’t you think?

Fritz said while laughing.

Latia suddenly stepped on one of his feet.

– ... ah, what are you doing!? You are injuring an important fighting power before the battle, you know!

– Humph, that’s because you say stupid things.

Latia turns her face away.

Once the announcement for J team finished, each and every one of the teams gathered.

The Slayers who are parting vowed to meet again tomorrow.

– ‘kay then, see you tomorrow.

– Yeah.

Hayato does a high five with Fritz, wishing to meet again.

Latia declared while putting both hands on her waist.

– I’ll beat a lot of Savage, I’m not going to lose against you!

– It’s fine to have that enthusiasm, but don’t get injured by doing something absurd. That’s the most important desuwayo. Understood desuka?

– Yes.

– Of course.

– Well then Claire-sama, see you later.

Latia and Fritz replied cheerfully all together and went to the meeting place of F team with Liddy.

– We should also move.

When they moved to the meeting place of E team along with the guidance of Claire, Claudia was waiting for them with an imposing stance.

– ... Hayato, be careful.

– Even if you tell me to be careful...

– In any case, we have no choice but to work with her masenwa.

Claire said so and went forward before Hayato and the others, heading towards Claudia, then presented her right hand.

– Nice to meet you, I am Claire Harvey, Student Council President of Little Garden desu.

– ... I know that. You are famous...

While pouting her lips, Claudia replied, but she didn’t hold the hand that was presented by Claire. Even against Claire, the representative of Emilia’s current living place, she seems to be wary.

While fixedly staring at such Claudia, Claire opens her mouth.

– I have heard about the relationship between you and Emile Crossford, and I also know the purpose about why you are here masu. However, as for us, Emile Crossford is an important companion and an essential fighting power desu. If she wants to stay with us, then we will do our utmost to protect her masu.

– ... what do you want to say?

Claudia shows a sulky attitude towards the sudden preemptive attack of Claire. Claire continued her words.

– We will come out to the battlefield from now on desu. Each of our lives will be exposed to critical situations, so my purpose is to try to not get caught in them desu That is why I have exposed my own thoughts here mashita.

– ... I see. I understand that. I have discerned something like that.

– ———If that's the case.

With a smile, Claire presented her hand once again.

– Fine, I understand.

Muttering like being annoyed, Claudia grasps back.

(Are we safe for the time being with this?)

While still being with anxiety, wireless *Vital Rings* and other tools used in this operation, together with pouches and rucksacks to put those things in, began to be distributed by the UN Peacekeeping Forces.

In the case of a five-person team, they are divided in: two vanguards, two rear guards and the last one is the support, and everyone carry their luggage in a distributive way.

The vanguard and rear guard have pouches. The support members will carry the backpacks and various supplies.

On E team, Hayato and Claudia, who have melee weapons, are the vanguard, Claire, whose weapon is mainly a long range one, and Emile, whose weapon is registered as a Dragoon type, are the rear guard. Erika is the assistant role.

After listening to the explanation, the members of each team equip the *Vital*

*Ring* on their arms and once they are ready, it has been decided that they will be transported to the operation starting point by a small transport helicopter.

Thus, the joint operation under the UN Peacekeeping Forces was starting exactly in the afternoon.



– There’s really a lot of them, huh. If we think in the numbers of the Hundred only, then it’s like a mountain of treasure.

A girl with bright hair and darkish skin is observing the Slayers of the UN Peacekeeping Forces with binoculars from an elevation in the desert.

She’s Nakri, one of the three hunters who flew from the unfolded fierce battle against Hayato and the others in the Zwei Islands.

– Moreover, there’s a large number of Savages on that mountain. A real mountain of treasure, isn’t it?

The next one who opened their mouth is Krovahn, a boy with an aloof personality.

– If we finish this mission, we are going to clear what we had to do and will be free...

There’s another girl, one who has a red scarf, she’s Nesat, Krovahn’s older sister, who said so.

– ... at last, right...?

Nakri murmured with a voice tinged with sadness.

Nesat nods.

– C’mon! Let’s go Nakri, Nee-chan! Let’s head to Mt. Kongur!



2pm of the first day of the operation. Hayato and the others have already descended from the helicopter and were halfway down Mt. Kongur. One hour

has passed since they started the search.

Because human beings haven't entered this area for nearly 10 years, plants and trees have grown in abundance as a matter of course, and even though there's quite a lot of animals and bugs they aren't familiar with, there's nothing abnormal so far.

Only that much gave a little of a hiking feeling... but the truth is, the heart of Hayato can't be at ease.

He should be fine, he's walking with Emile, behind them are Claire and Erika. But, the problem is that behind them— —

— .....

Claudia Lowetti is walking, making sure to glare at Hayato.

In the last hour, Hayato was continuously feeling something stinging, like thirst for blood on his back. Even though it's not like she was going to swoop down on him abruptly, in a situation like that, it was natural for his mind to be wearing out.

— The weather has become somewhat worse mashitawane.

Stopping her feet, Claire muttered while looking at the sky.

Of course, they don't have an umbrella.

If it starts to rain, they will have to take shelter from the rain somewhere, or else they will have to move forward while getting wet.

— Please wait a moment, I will check the latest data on weather forecast.

Erika's glasses connected wirelessly to the PDA inside her pouch. She's opening the weather data.

— In the latest weather forecast, the precipitation probability is near 50% between 9pm and midnight local time, but outside of that hour is around 10%. If we exclude those 3 hours, although there are many clouds, I think that the rain will come first.

— If that's the case, at that time we will surely be in the shed, the place of destination already, so it shouldn't be that much of a problem desuwane.



However, if the Savages appear during that time, it will be a little troublesome.

– Troublesome?

– Optical weapons don't get along with rain, you know.

Emile whispers into Hayato's ear who thought *is that so?*

Although it uses *energy*, the beams emitted from an optical weapon drop due to the friction with air, dust, dirt and so on.

He remembers learning in classes that rain is the biggest among them.

– Haa, I can't believe that you, a man of such degree, says that he doesn't remember such a commonsense thing, is worthy of Emilia-sama.

– ... worthy of Emilia-sama? What is she talking about desuno?

Hayato gets stared at by Claire.

– No, that, well...

And, Hayato was at a loss for words.

– Everyone, please calm down a little.

Erika exclaimed.

– From the direction of three o'clock from our direction of movement, I hear the sounds of many trees grazing against something.

– Eh...?

Erika turned her eyes towards that direction, Hayato and all present turned their eyes, and heard it.

– Certainly, I heard it.

Emile shows consent with a small voice.

– Yes, I heard it too mashitawa.

– I heard it too.

That's the same for Claudia.

Of course, Hayato also noticed the sound.

Not only the sounds of threes touching each other, but also sounds like

branches of trees breaking can be heard.

– It would be nice if it was a bear or a wolf but...

Claire makes a severe facial expression.

If it was an ordinary human, it's still enough a subject of terror, but not for the Slayers.

Compared to the Savage, they are an easy opponent.

– Let's go check first.

Emile walks ahead.

She's doing it slowly to not make a sound.

Nukiashi, sashiashi, shinobiashi\*.

**\*TN: 抜き足、差し足、忍び足. All of them are translated as “stealthy footsteps”.**

– ... there it is shitawane.

Having walked not more than 100 meters, Hayato and the girls stopped their feet, as they could see and confirm the figure of their target from the opening of the many trees.

Erika muttered at the same time she grasps the giant that is 50 meters ahead.

– In the end, it was a Savage...

Moreover, it wasn't one, but two of them.

Erika moves fiercely the eyes beyond the glasses.

Her glasses are wirelessly connected to the PDA inside her pouch and the *Vital Ring*, so that images can be projected on it. It seems she's analyzing the Savage, comparing it with its historical data.

– It looks like these are just normal types. They are relatively small. Given our strength, they aren't great opponents.

– If so, I will take care of one of them. Emile Crossford, Kisaragi Hayato, Claudia Lowetti, please take care of the other Savage.

– The president is going to take care of it by herself?

– It's no more than a normal type, so with me is enough desuwa. We still have a long way to go, so we should be able to consume minimal *energy* desu.

Claire shouted, taking out the Hundred.

– *HUNDRED ON!!*

The red ore shed green light, the body of the president is wrapped in popping particles and is quickly covered in red armor.

In the surroundings of her body, there are six floating batteries, they are the symbol of her Dragoon type Hundred, 《Noble Warrior Princess》*Alisterion*.

– Come now, deploy you too.

– No need to tell me.

Following Emile who replied, both Hayato and Claudia also deploy their Hundred.

– Hmm, is that your Hundred...?

What appeared on the body of Claudia and that wrapped up her in orange particles is a western knight style Silver Plate and a hammer-like thing that she was holding in her hand and used it like she did yesterday at the dōjō, it's evident that what's attached to the tip it's not a wooden ball, but an iron ball-like thing.

– Yes, this is my Crusher type Hundred, 《Rose Iron Ball》*Tudor Rose*. Fufun, what do you think, it's cool, isn't it?

Claudia was elated and behaved like a spoiled child.

– Like always, the armament of Emilia-sama is also very cool. Kisaragi Hayato doesn't deserve a mention.

– I told you, stop calling me Emilia!

Like that, Emile was dressed in white armor and deployed 《Fog that Covers Everything》*Arms Shroud* around her body.

The right arm of Hayato, who's standing next to her, is covered with an armor like a sleeve of an armor piled up many times, and a thick sword appears in his

hand.

His Hundred, 《Swallow in Flight》*Hien*, is a Chevalier type.

– It looks everyone is ready *desuwane*. In that case, I will begin *masuwa*.

Claire confirmed that the other three finished deploying their Hundred and deployed six floating batteries towards the target and accelerated, going after it.

The targeted Savage soon realized the presence of a foreign enemy aiming at itself.

Rising violently while moving its antennas, it takes offense.

Aiming at the Savage, the floating batteries of Claire began to fire beams one after another.

With a glimpse, it seems there's almost no damage, as it defended against them with its steel shell, but the *barrier* covering the surface is wearing out while receiving the beams.

Depending on the specimen, if it receives more than 10 beams, then they'll be able to surely penetrate the *barrier*.

– Ah, it's gone!

Hayato shouted instinctively.

It went through the *barrier* of the Savage and an air hole was opened in the steel shell.

Savage raised a yell-like scream, raised both pincers overhead and launched an attack on Claire.

But Claire dodged them with a jump, then changed the armor of her right arm in the air into a *railgun*.

The six floating batteries assembled with the *railgun*, turning into something like a huge cannon.

– I will finish it— —with this *desuwa*!

What she's aiming at is, of course, the core that is in the head.

According to Claire's declaration, the brilliant *energy* bundles and gathers in the muzzle and not only pierced through the defense of the Savage, but also the steel shell and the core.

– Amazing...

Hayato muttered spontaneously.

It was because the battle style of Claire, as well as her alias, [Undeclared Queen]*Perfect Queen* and [Guardian of the Roses]*Rose Guardian*, were refreshed to a certain degree in his mind.

– We can't get behind!

Immediately after Emile said so.

– If so, I will go!

Shouting, Claudia rushed out alone and ran towards the Savage.

– Will she be fine?

– I think she'll be okay, I guess... well, let's see. If it gets dangerous, then we should help her.

She doesn't look flustered at all, even though she's fighting now, that's because Emile won't do things like exposing her childhood friend to the danger in a merciless way.

(Sh-she won't, right...?)

He became somewhat worried, but Emile said that Claudia's skill as Slayer was equal to Latia and Fritz.

If so, she should manage it somehow.

Looks like it was perceiving the presence of enemies nearby.

The Savage moved its long haptic senses and noticed the approaching Claudia, standing up and attacking just like the one who did it with Claire.

And then, as soon as it opened its head, it fired a bombardment.

– Ha, something like this, it's nothing!

However, she wasn't perturbed at all by the sudden bombardment.

Claudia avoided the beam that was fired by jumping and brandished *Tudor Rose*. Because of her *sense energy*, things like red thorns appear from the iron ball.

– Take this!

Claudia's iron ball hits the defense barrier of the Savage.

However, it didn't lead to its destruction. It was merely scratched by the thorns.

– There's no need to say that that wasn't all.

Claudia pulled the chain of her hand and attracted the iron ball to her body, then rotate it over her head, and hit the big body of the Savage again.

However, what she hits is the abdomen covered with steel shell, the Savage wasn't affected at all.

On the contrary, it raised its pincers.

But Claudia didn't try to evade them.

– Hah, there's no need to do that with something of this degree!

Claudia immediately stops the blow of the right pincer of the Savage with the iron ball attached to the end of the hammer that pulled towards herself and return it as it is.

The pincer springs up towards the sky.

And while Claudia rotates her body using centrifugal force, she delivered a hit towards the torso with *Tudor Rose*.

The giant Savage blows off while knocking down all kinds of trees and crashes into a rock wall.



Because of the impact of hitting the wall, the Savage can't move. It seems

that it's in a rigid state.

Unlike a while ago, in this state it lowered its head.

– Finish it, Emilia-sama!

– Got it!!

This is not the time to say to her to not call her Emilia.

Emile jumped high inside the whirling cloud of dust, changes one of her *Arms Shroud* to something like a huge hammer and swings it down, aiming at the core of the Savage.

– Eat this!

The shock was enough to destroy the defense and the core in one go.

– As always, Emilia-sama is superb!

– I'm telling you, I'm Emile, not Emilia...

– No, that's no good, Emilia-sama. And what do you think? Don't you agree that I did a good combination with Emilia-sama, and that I'm more useful than Kisaragi Hayato?

– Don't tell me, it was your intention to let me finish it off like that?

– That's right, the first group work of us.

Claudia shows a bashful facial expression, putting both hands on her cheeks.

Hayato thinks, looking at their exchange.

(In some way, they are quite similar...)

He thought that the behavior of Emile hugging out of nowhere may be the influence of this girl.

... or maybe it's related to their lineage?

Both of them are very obstinate, and only hear themselves.

– Anyway, shouldn't we end our task first...?

Erika sighs with exasperation.

– I think so too desuwane.



Following Claire who nods and cancels the armament, both Emile and Claudia also cancel their armaments.

Finally, Hayato also canceled his armament.

– Erika, report the end of the battle to HQ please.

– Understood.

After she listens the reply of Erika, Claire approaches the side of the corpse of the Savage and began to bury black, small stakes-like things on the ground that she retrieved from the pouch.

– What are you doing?

– I am attaching a transmitter desuwa.

– ... a transmitter?

Being told so, it definitely has a shape like an antenna.

– The position data of this place has already been transmitted to the base camp, but it is easier for the soldiers at HQ to recover the core if you set this up desuwa.

In other words, it seems that the soldiers of the UN Peacekeeping Forces will come to collect the core of the Savage later.

Claire finished installing the transmitters, turned around and pointed her eyes towards Hayato.

– ... Kisaragi Hayato. Are you perhaps thinking that you couldn't do anything now?

– Eh...?

– Am I wrong?

– No, you are correct.

– It is obvious. You were having that sort of face.

Claire slips out a smile.

– But, do not worry about that masenwa. We still have long ways to go from now on desu. Surely there will be times when we will need your strength

desuwa. When that happens, you have to fully demonstrate your strength. We count on you masuwayo.



5 hours have passed since the operation began.

The sun is almost hidden in the ridgeline of the mountain and the sky is dyed with gradation of cobalt and madder red colors.

The F team where Fritz, Latia and Liddy belong to, is battling with the Savage.  
– Take this!

It's Aly Harlech, a girl of Al Salaam who swung downward a weapon shaped like a Yanagi knife that she held with both hands, pointing towards the defensive barrier of the Savage, jumping high.

The attack didn't lead to the destruction of the defensive barrier, but it was effective, it only had the effect of bringing down the head of the Savage that was just about to attack.

– Latia-san, the chance is now!

A girl of the army of Liberia. It's Wendy Velvet, the supporter of F group who shouts.

– Yeah, leave it to me!

If it's right after the attack, then the Savage will incline its head, that means that it's in a rigid state and that it can't attack.

The accelerated Latia struck the knuckle shining in pink color, which is the color of her *energy*, on the defensive barrier of the Savage.

Although she was able to destroy the defensive barrier, it didn't lead to the destruction of the core.

– Out of the way, I'll finish it off!

– No way!

When Latia shouted, Harlech protested, her face is deep red.

– Don't "no way" me! That's not what we agreed!

In this battle, the vanguards Latia and Harlech decided to start attacking it by turns, one hit each.

Only that, Latia's behavior goes against the rules, making Harlech to lay bare her anger.

– No, I haven't broken my promise.

– What, the...? What do you mean with that, Latia Saint-Émillion!

– Because, my attack hasn't ended yet.

Latia smiles and shouts.

– Look, this is my new "Killer • Technique"!

The moment the fist emitted a strong light, the knuckle separated from the arm and penetrated without stopping not only the steel shell, but also the core of the Savage.

– How was it!?

The knuckle left a trail of pink color like a rocket and returns to the arm of Latia who shows a "got you!" facial expression.

– *\*Whistles\**, you used it, huh? I haven't heard of that either.

Whistling, Fritz praises her.

– Fufufu, if the opponent is a Slayer, it's possible to damage them with shock waves and air swirls but I thought *that's not going to work if the opponent is a Savage*. I consulted Dr. Charlotte to improve secretly the Hundred in order to use this technique. It was an attack at zero distance this time, but this can be released towards long distances. What do you think? Amazing, right!?

– Uh huh, amazing, and I was truly surprised. You do have a head to think about something like that, don't you?

– Don't touch my head! Even I fight thinking with diligence, you know!? I'm not a child, I'm an adult already!

– Anyway, with this, we have defeated 2. Wendy, can you contact HQ?

– Yes, understood, Liddy-san.

Watching Wendy who starts the communication, Liddy canceled her armament. Next, Latia, Fritz and Harlech cancel their armaments too.

– They are coming to collect the cores right away. I will set up the communication devices now, please wait a moment.

Wendy began to bury the communication devices in the ground.

In the meanwhile, in order to take a look at the situation of the others, Fritz starts to touch the PDA that he took out from the pouch.

– Oh, Hayato's team has defeated four.

– What, for real!?

– Look and confirm it by yourself.

Doing as she was told, Latia also takes out the PDA and confirms it.

– Wow, it's true! As one would expect of Hayato and the others.

– We must do our best as well.

– Yup!



In the dark woods, Hayato and co. were engaging their third fight today. They encountered only 1 Savage this time—

– This will decide it!

Hayato saw the gap created by Emile and the president and readied *Hien* in an overhead position, then accelerated and soared through the opening of the many trees and stabbed the pointed end of the sword into the core.

The core breaks in two due to the attack and the movement of the Savage stops.

– Hooray!

Landing on the ground, Hayato takes a breath.

– You were able to play an active role like you wanted, Kisaragi Hayato.

Claire shows appreciation for his efforts while showing a smile full of fondness.

– I only did it because I was the last one. It's thanks to the president and the others.

– Humph, exactly.

When Hayato showed a humble attitude, Claudia laughs scornfully, looking down on him.

– In the first place, you were able to deliver the final blow because I destroyed its defensive barrier with *Tudor Rose*.

It seems that Claudia won't recognize the ability of Hayato.

– Of course, I also acknowledge your results masuwayo, Claudia Lowetti.

– I-I don't care, it-it's not that I wanted to gain results!

In response to the words of Claire, Claudia counterarguments, and her face turns red.

– Anyway, this is the fifth one. It feels nice.

That's what Emile said.

– I agree.

Erika nodded and continues her words.

– We are almost at our target point, and for now nobody is hurt. The amount of consumption of *sense energy* isn't that great, it's safe to say that we executed it perfectly, don't you agree?

– How is the situation of Fritz team?

– Please wait a moment. I will connect to the database of the basecamp and check it.

The glasses of Erika who received the question of Hayato begin to emit light inside the darkness.

– It appears that they have defeated their third Savage. They are approaching

their target point like us, and there's no information regarding injuries and the like. However——

Erika's facial expression becomes cloudy.

– Is there something wrong?

Being worried, Hayato asked again.

– It's not that much of being a problem, but their consumption of *sense energy* is strong. There's almost no damage on their side but having that many fights is a waste. Especially Latia and the Slayer of Al-Salaam, Aly Harlech, both have consumed more than 50% of *sense energy*. The *sense energy* of the other two people has barely decreased, but...

– Does that mean those two are fighting for battle results?

– Al-Salaam is an antagonistic organization of Little Garden, so that possibility is high.

Erika agrees to the guess of Emile, and continued, sighing with exasperation.

– When we arrive at the destination point, we will be able to eat and sleep. With that, *sense energy* will recover naturally, so we shouldn't care about too much. Other than me, our team has consumed around 20% of *sense energy*.

– I'll say a little more but, how much further is the destination point? I'm a little hungry now.

Emile asks Erika while covering her abdomen with her hands.

– We are still around 5 kilometers away of the mark point desuwayo.

Claire answered after finishing setting the transmitter near the corpse of the Savage.

It seems that she was checking the map data with the PDA.

– In short, we have to endure around one hour more.

Sighing, Emile mutters.

– I want to eat food asap, so I hope we don't encounter more Savages...

The wish of Emile came true, they didn't encounter any Savages till they get

to the target point.

As Claire hypothesized, they were able to reach the target point around the established time.

As might be expected from this vicinity which entrance was blocked for 10 years, there are ivies twisting around the shed, emanating quite an ominous atmosphere.

– Looks like the lock is broken.

Erika thrust the key that she was entrusted with by the operation headquarters into the keyhole, but she's unable to rotate it.

– What do we do? Assuming we break the door, it will be extremely unlikely to rest inside this tattered state, and it looks that it will rain.

– Don't worry desuwa, Emile Crossford. This shed is no more than our place of destination. I also assumed this situation nanodesu.

Claire says that there are no blankets nor sleeping bags in this shed in the first place.

The goods of that kind were delivered from a transport aircraft around one hour before they arrived, there's an arranged tent for taking a rest among those goods.

– So, where are those supplies?

Hayato asks after Emile.

– Please wait a moment.

Erica's glasses shone out in the light darkness. Somehow, she's projecting the map data on the lens.

– I have found the location. There seems to be a box with goods in the direction of north-northwest—that is, 11 o'clock, 300 meters from this place. Nonetheless, it has a transmitter attached to it, so it will be easier to find it before the sun has completely gone, so let's recover it fast.

Following the lead of Erika, Hayato and the others walk in the light dark forest.

– This seems to be the area.

Erika's *Vital Ring* was shining bluish-white.

It appears to be informing that the objective is within the radius of 50 meters.

– Over there!

Hayato notices that a part of the thicket is emitting light when he creeps with his line of sight the surroundings and indicates with his finger.

When heading to that place, there was a square box of around 1 meter in length, width and depth, marked with the stamp of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, covered with cushion around it.

– There's no doubt this is the one desuwane.

– Do we open it here?

– No, let's go back to the shed, we will open it there.

– If so, I'll carry it.

When Hayato heard the answer of Claire, he puts his hands on the boxes, looking like he's showing his manliness,

– I'll help too.

And, Emile put her hands on the box too.

Claudia raised her voice there.

– There's no need for Emilia-sama to do that! If Emilia-sama holds it, then I will hold it!

And, Claudia puts her hands on the box, pushing aside Emile.

– Kisaragi Hayato, we will carry it.

– O-okay...

While puzzled, Hayato answered and raised the box.

– It-it's heavy...

– I don't think so.

The contents are probably around 20 kilos.



– Should I help you?

– It's fine. The hands of Emilia-sama mustn't suffer!

Claudia keeps carrying the box, although she seems to be suffering with the height difference with Hayato.

They walked a bit, and *drops drops*, it started to rain.

– It feels like we will have to contest a big one, don't you think?

As guessed by Erika, when they arrived in front of the shed, the rain was pretty strong

When Hayato and Claudia put the box under the eaves at the entrance of the shed, Erika brings the *Vital Ring* to input the PIN that came with the email closer to the sensor.

Sounding with a click, the lock is released, open the box, and check the paper placed on the top.

Inside the box is a folded tent and 5 sleeping bags— —.

And, it is written that there's water and <battlefield meal> *combat rations* that come sealed in silver aluminum, like a retort pouch.

– Let's set up the tent for the time being.

Claire took the tent.

Hayato also helps setting up the tent.

He was taught about it in class work, and since this was something made by Warslan Company, he was able to set it up in the blink of an eye, without being bewildered.

In order to keep out the rain, everyone enters into it.

The size is wide, but barely enough to let 5 people lie down.

Immediately after, Erika informs Shuemei, who's in the base camp, that they arrived at the objective point, recovered the supplies and started to rest, Hayato and the others also were able to hear this conversation since it was in open mode.

They are now listening to the situation of the other units.

Looks like more than half of the teams, including the team of Fritz, haven't arrived at their destinations. She continues informing the instructions that come after this.

There are many dangers while raining, so refrain from exploring, remain in the tent and take a rest.

As the rain will stop past midnight, they can explore their surroundings lightly, focusing on their current point.

Continue doing that until tomorrow noon, descend the mountain, and the operation is over.

– Well then, please continue doing your best.

Being those words the last ones, the communication with Shuemei was terminated.

– I'm going to eat to my heart's desire!

Emile gives a happy voice.

The meal is a hard cookie in a sealed silver-colored aluminum pack. Three cookies come in a pack, and if you eat these, you can ingest enough calories to move for a day, these are indeed battlefield meals.

Certainly, it's adjusted to have a great effect on the recovery of *vital* and *sense energy* but, the degree of satisfaction was another problem, since the taste was very nonexistent.

The stomach of Emile, the glutton, wasn't satisfied without gourmet, and even after she finished her meal, her stomach was rumbling as if it was natural.

– Ugh, this doesn't calm my hunger.... The ones that I ate in the outside training before with meat paste were delicious. And there was canned food...

– It can't be helped because the current battlefield meal is from Al-Salaam.

It's said that the amount of supplies goods being used is approximately the same from Warslan, Al-Salaam and Paladian, the three companies which are the major Private Military Companies participating in this operation\*.

**\*TN: It means that if there are 12 tents, each company brought 4, and so on.**

This time, the thing of Warslan is the tent and the food is of Al-Salaam.

– By the way, tomorrow morning we will have crackers, and finally cereal bar for lunch.

– Noo, nothing delicate... There's nothing else?

While saying that, she looks inside the sack that contains the supply goods, but there were only the same aluminum pack.

– Ah, there's more than I thought. Can I eat another bag? Even if we exclude tomorrow morning or noon, its' only three meals.

While saying so, she tried to take out one pack from the sack, but Erika instantly hits her hand with her palm.

– Eating is prohibited. This food is used mainly for disasters or any of the sort.

– Tsk....

By the time the meal was over, the outside of the tent was completely dark. The rain is getting intense, and the sound of the raindrops that hit the tent resound inside of it.

– I would like to divide the team into two teams from now on masuwa.

It's Claire who announced so.

The instructions from HQ should be on break until the rain stops—although, of course, not all of them are absent.

Wild dogs and bears may attack them, and it's possible that a Savage may raid too. Someone must stand watch outside the tent.

– The plan we are going to carry out is to stand watch with a rotation of two teams desu.

– Yes, a question.

Emile suddenly raised her hand.

– What is it, Emile Crossford?

– Our team has 5 people, right? In that case, the teams are going to be of 2 and 3 people, aren't they? If Claudia and Hayato are in the same team, I feel that might be awfully dangerous...

They can understand what Emile wants to say.

Hayato himself wants to be forgiven of that.

– In that case, the four of us who are from Little Garden do 2 pairs and then Claudia Lowetti joins one of the two.

It was Erika who made that kind of proposal.

– If so, then I'm with Hayato.

– He-hey!

Hayato is upset, because Emile who's sitting next to him grabs his arm.

– As for me, I feel that you, being together, is dangerous masuwa. Separate right now.

Claire said so with a trembling voice.

It's Claudia who opened her mouth next.

– Claire-san says that it's dangerous for Kisaragi Hayato and I, but as for me, I think that it's dangerous for a man to be alone with a woman.

– Now that you mention it so desuwane. In that case, Kisaragi Hayato will be in the team of three. I will be in that team masuwa.

– Wait a minute, why is Prez entering that one? That's so sly, isn't it!?

– Why are you saying that it is sly desu? I don't know what will happen if Claudia, Kisaragi Hayato and you are standing watch desu. It's too risky masuwa.

– Ough...

Emile is clogged with words.

Certainly, it's just as Claire says.

However, Emile seems to be unhappy.

– But then, if it's not the Prez, then the vice prez will do?

– If it's Erika, then she may not be able to stop them if anything happens between them, don't you agree?

– That may be so but...

Emile turns her line of sight to Hayato.

– Is Hayato okay with that?

– I certainly think that, as things are going, that this team division is the best, so I agree with it too...

– I think so too. But it's unfortunate that I'm not with Emilia-sama.

Following Hayato, Claudia said.

It's surprising for Hayato, because he didn't think that she could be easily convinced.

– Erika-san, can you say that you are okay with it? Don't you want to be together with the Prez?

– ... wh-what are you saying, Emile Crossford. I will follow the decision of Claire-sama.

– Uu....

Because Erika yearns for Claire, she thought she would accept to be together with Claire.

Emile hung her head, looking deplorable.

– ... fine, if that's what you want to do, then do it.

Emile shows consent while pouting her lips.

As a result, the sleep was divided into A team of Erika and Emile, and B team of Hayato, Claire and Claudia.

The remaining issues are order and time.

Tomorrow at 08:00 they will vacate the tent and start to move normally.

Now is past 20:00, they have scheduled to wake up at 06:00.

As one of the two teams will sleep from 21:00, each team will have 4 and a half hours to sleep.

As a result of the discussion, Erika and Emile of A team had to stand watch first until 01:30.

By the time the day changes the rain will have stopped, and if so, the three people think that they can do effortless search.

– I really wanted to sleep and patrol together with Hayato...

Emile was sitting on the floor grasping her knees at a corner of the tent.

Erika calls out there.

– This is not situation where you can grumble about it. Let's go outside.

– ... eh, now?

– We are going to pick up dead trees that are not wet as much as we can at once to make something like a fireplace once the rain has stopped to make fire.

They heard that installing that can help with the animals, so they don't approach them after this.

– Shall we also help?

– Claire-sama and the others are a little hurry, but please take a rest. We have to explore after the rain stops and I think that it's better to recover more *sense energy* even if it's a little in case something happens.

– Uu, Hayatoo...

Emile appeals that she wants to be a little more in this place, and shows a sad expression.

However, Erika didn't allow it.

– Let's go, Emile Crossford.

– U~

Emile is dragged out of the tent by Erika.

After that, the team of Hayato get into their sleeping bags and decided to sleep.



– Wake up, Hayato, it's time to change...

With that voice, Kisaragi Hayato wakes up.

– I see, it's time already...

Looking at Emile Crossford in the eyes and the oblique wall behind her, Hayato remembered the situation he's placed now.

Although the sleeping time was of 4 and a half hours, in fact, Hayato could sleep for about 3 and a half hours.

Speaking of the reason, is that he had to sleep with two girls at his side inside this narrow tent, those are Claudia and Claire.

They were wrapped up in sleeping bags, but more than that, he was also afraid of being attacked by Claudia.

However, the interior of the tent was enveloped by a sweet scent peculiar to women, and after a while, he also heard their lovely sleeping breaths.

Because of that, his heart was somewhat racing, so he couldn't fall asleep right away.

Still, he has to get up already.

When opening the zipper of the sleeping bag and trying to raise his body, PPPPP.... The alarm began to ring next to Claire.

Looks like that woke her up. Claire opens the sleeping bag and raises her body slowly. Claudia woke up in the same way with the sound of the alarm and also raises her body from the sleeping bag. The three of them went outside the tent with Emile.

The rain has already stopped. When they look up at the sky, they could see the shining stars from the gaps in the trees. However, the ground is still wet and muddy.

– Good morning, Claire-sama.

Erika greets Hayato and the others who came out from the tent.

She was sitting on a big rock, which is on the side of the bonfire.

It seems she collected them as a chair replacement.

A total of six were placed so as to surround the bonfire.

– Good morning, Erika. How is the situation desuno?

– There are no changes in particular, the exception is that the rain ceased around an hour ago. As for the situation, it's peaceful and safe.

Erika taught the situation of the other teams when Hayato and the girls sit on the stones surrounding the bonfire.

She said that all teams have already arrived at their target points.

While some explore in the night, there are groups that have found Savages and are fighting them, but there are no severely wounded Slayers.

It's just been half a day now since the strategy has started.

42 Savages have been slaughtered.

Three big fragments of *Variable Stones* have been found too.

They are close to those estimated 50 Savages existing on this mountain, but that also means that there may be 60 Savages if this keeps like this.

There may still be *Variable Stones*.

– Well then, Claire-sama, I will leave the rest to you.

Erika finished the report, stands up and attempts to enter the tent, but notices Emile who's sitting on the rock next to Hayato, smiling with her whole face.

– Go to sleep, Emile Crossford.

– Hayato and the others have finally woken up, so it's impossible to stay awake a bit more? I'm not that much sleepy and I'd like to talk for a little while.

– I haven't forgotten that you said over and over that you were hungry until a while ago, and that you wanted to sleep with Hayato.

– Uh...

– If something happens from now on, you will have insufficient *energy* due to lack of sleep, and your fighting power will go substantially down. Let's get a good sleep.



– Fine, I'll do it...! Good night, Hayato.

– Yeah, sleep tightly.

– U~~

While raising her voice mixed with vexation, Erika dragged Erika into the tent.

Claire murmured while looking up at the sky. Around 10 minutes have passed since they are standing watch.

– Nevertheless, it is a beautiful starry sky desuwane.

Similarly, Hayato looks up at the sky.

The altitude is high, the air is clear and, in the sky that can be seen through the gaps of the trees, the stars and planets, as if they weren't already enough, were spread all over.

Hayato keeps fixedly staring at the starry sky for several seconds.

– ... I couldn't see such a beautiful starry sky in the rural town of Yamato where I lived.

Those were the words that he came out with.

– That goes for me too, it's the first time I see such a beautiful starry sky desuwa.

– I want to show this to my little sister. She will be delighted to see the gorgeous starry sky in Little Garden too.

– I'm hoping for that day to come desuwane.

Claire continued, looking at the starry sky, and said as if she was talking to herself.

– We are fighting like this to create a world where you can look at the beautiful starry sky anytime, anywhere desu.

– And for that, we must end the fight with the Savage first, deter disputes among humans and to end the chaos of this world on and after the *First Attack*, correct?

Claire always declared that that's the first goal of Little Garden.

– Yes, you are right desuwa.

Claire smiled complacently in response to the words of Hayato.

– Err, somehow you too are having a good time, and I’m sorry about this but, do you have a minute?

– Wha, what’s that “having a good time” desuno, Claudia Lowett!!

– A world created by two people, that was just like a love scene of a movie.

– ...!

The face of Claire turns red.

Laughing with a \*hihihi\*, Claudia continued.

– I’m sorry for stepping in and getting in your way for the time being, but there’s a reason for that.

– A reason?

– Yes, that’s right, Kisaragi Hayato.

Saying, Claudia pointed out her finger towards the west

– There’s a quay that way, right? There’s a lake in that area.

– I know that masuwayo. It was made by a meteorite that fell during the *First Attack* desuwayone. What’s with that mashitano?

– The trees shook over there, and I felt that a big shadow was reflected on the quay.

– That’s, no way—

– I think the possibility of being a Savage is high.

Fixedly staring at Hayato’s eyes, Claudia said.

It’s very likely that a Savage has appeared near the place where the meteorite has fallen.

That’s why this place is the base of the hunt.

– ... that said, it may be better for us to check properly if there are any Savages or not. How about conducting it yourselves?

– But if it's a Savage, you will be the only one remaining in this place masuwa. It's dangerous if something happens, so we should wake up Erika and Emilia.

– No, it's no good to wake them up because there's no confirmation of it, and you will be okay. Of course, in the case that something happens, if a Savage has appeared, we will contact you with this.

Claudia turns her eyes towards the *Vital Ring*.

– ... will you really be okay desuno?

– Yes, I will be fine.

Hitting her chest with a slap, Claudia continued.

– By the way, there's a lake on that direction as I said earlier. The sky is open too, I think you can see the stars more beautifully there. And if there's nothing, how about having a date you two over there? Because no one will get on your way, you will be able to flirt as much as you like.

– A da-date you say? Don't say such stupid things! Besides, things like flirting are...

Claire began to walk, refuting while her face becomes red, turning her eyes towards the direction they have to move.

– L-let's go masuwayo, Kisaragi Hayato.

– Ah, yes...

Running after her, Claire gives a warning to Hayato.

– Th-this is not a date. I-it's patrolling desuwayo!



– Now, that turned out well.

Claudia Lowetti had a contentment smile while looking at the backs of the two disappearing into the forest.

As a matter of fact, she hasn't sensed the presence of a Savage.

It's positive that the forest shook, but she thought that it was due to beasts

such as bears or wolves.

However, she has two reasons to have them head for exploration.

She's convinced that Claire Harvey cares about Kisaragi Hayato due to her behavior during this half day.

If this event triggers them to get closer and become lovey-dovey, the place where Emile belongs will be gone, and.

(If that happens, Emilia-sama will come back to Gudenburg... gufuh, gufuh, gufufufu...)

Claudia couldn't contain her overflowing laugh thanks to the perfection of her plan.



At the same time, a boy and two girls who have tanned skin were resting in a small cavern located around 10 kilometers from the place where Hayato and co. are resting.

They are the trio of *hunters*.

– It seems that the rain has stopped, we must start moving soon. And it's a good time for the Savages to move lively.

It's Krovahn, a boy with black hair and aloof personality who stood up and is carrying a sort of antenna with a tripod on his shoulder.

Then the two girls, Nakri and Nesat, also stand up.

– Krovahn, what do we do now?

– First, we do what Vitaly told us, and that is, to sever the means of contact of those guys. The place we are aiming from now on is over there.

Krovahn answered the question of Nakri and pointed with his gaze at the peak of the mountain of around 3,000 meters height around Mt. Kongur.



– It's no surprise that the inside of the forest is dark, huh.

The light of the moonlight and the stars comes in from the gap of the tress above their heads, however, it's a small amount. The visibility is less than one meter.

– If you feel uneasy, I can make it brighter masuwa.

Saying that, Claire took out the Hundred from her chest and put it on the palm.

Then the Hundred gently rises from her hand and starts to emit green light.

Thanks to that, it illuminates the surroundings like a torch.

– Awesome, the president can do something like this.

– Anyone will be able to do it as long as they practice for a while masuwayo. Let's hurry.

Claire slips out a smile and starts walking further into the forest.

Claudia said that the lake was around 15-minute distance from the shed.

They should get there soon.

And there, the president suddenly stopped her feet.

The light being emitted by the Hundred also vanishes.

– President, did something happen?

– Shhh, listen carefully.

– Oh, yes...

Doing as he was told, he listens carefully and noticed that in the noise of the trees, a rustling-like noise can be heard.

It sounds like something is grazing the trees.

In addition to that, they can hear the sound of something walking on the mud.

– No way, that's a...

– It's definitively a Savage.

Claire declared so.

– ... should we contact Claudia?

– Please do so. We will tail the Savage so that it doesn't find us out and wait for the arrival of the other members.

– Understood.

Nodding, Hayato tries to contact Claudia with the *Vital Ring*, however,

– ... huh?

– What's the matter masaitano?

– I can't connect with Claudia. Can the president do it instead please?

– You really are poor at machines desuwa...

Saying that and looking amazed, Claire started manipulating her *Vital Ring*, but the situation is strange. She immediately narrows her eyes with a troubled appearance,

– It's strange desuwa I can't connect either masenwa. Not only with our group or headquarters, I can't access the map data either...

– Maybe this place is at fault?

– The state of the signal is good but.... It may be that the magnetic field is disturbed masenwa. At any rate, I'm not completely sure in this situation masenwa.

That means, she gives up.

Looks like the cause is unknown.

– Then, what do we do?

– Let's check the Savage first. After that, we will decide on what to do masuwa. We might be able to get in touch if we change our position.

Both Hayato and Claire walk to the direction they hear those abnormal sounds.

In less than a minute, they were able to grasp the appearance of a Savage from the gaps of the trees.

It's at a distance of 200 meters.

– As expected, it's a Savage shitawane.

– ... yeah.

Nonetheless, its size isn't a big deal. Looks like it's a normal type.

– The communication won't recover as usual masenwane.

Checking the *Vital Ring*, Claire murmured, looking troubled.

– Should we turn back for now?

– Yes desuwane...

Then, she thinks for a few seconds.

– Judging from its appearance, there's no point to be particularly concerned about it, but we will be troubled if we lose sight of it masu. And if the size of the Savage is of that degree, then we should be able to manage it somehow, don't you agree?

That was the conclusion of Claire.

In short, it means that they will be the opponent of the Savage.

Taking out the Hundred, Claire mutters in a small voice.

– ... *Hundred On*.

She deployed *Alisterion*.

A red armor covers her body and six floating batteries appear around her body.

– Well then, me too...

There is no need for that masenwa. If it's that one, then even one person will be fine desu.

Claire restrains Hayato who took out the Hundred and grasped it tightly.

– But...

– Please watch.

Saying so, Claire created a *railgun* in her hand and accelerates, heading towards the Savage.

When she got closer to a distance of 10 meters, the floating batteries were deployed around the Savage and fired a beam from one of them, instead of a greeting.

The Savage stands up in response to it and started an offense using its long antennas, searching for the position of the floating batteries and started swinging the pincers.

However, the six batteries evade the attack of the Savage and start to fire beams one after another.

The effectiveness of the first two beams just damaged the steel shell. However, the third burned off the steel shell and penetrated the body.

The Savage shrieks.

– This will decide it masuwa!

Claire let go the moment to stop her movement and kicks up the ground, jumping and punching the defense barrier of the core on the head with the *railgun* created in her right hand with the intention of destroying it, but——

– Kyaah!?

Tripping up on the ground because it was muddy by the rain, she loses the balance of her body, moreover, she falls on her bottom.

The pincers of the Savage that are no longer in a rigid state were raised overhead and she raises her face, becoming confused.

– ...!!

Claire, who has fallen on her bottom and while being like that, turned the *railgun* of her right hand towards the Savage.

She ponders that maybe she will push away the Savage with that power.

However, just before firing, Kisaragi Hayato appeared with his armament deployed in front of her eyes. Swinging *Hien*, he sent the body of the Savage flying far away.

– Kisaragi, Hayato...

– Are you okay, president!?



– Umm, yes, I just simply fell, it's not a big deal.... B-by the way, thank, you...

Mumbling as if she was embarrassed, the president turned her face downward, but she immediately stared in wonder.

– Kisaragi Hayato, a bombardment is coming masuwayo!

Hayato looks back with the voice.

In response to the attack of Hayato, the Savage that cancelled its attack state, immediately raises its body and opened its head.

Still, there's no need to be impatient.

– If so, then this much will do!

Hayato accelerates, returning to the position of the Savage while cutting it off with *Hien* that was clad in *energy*.

He jumps high and strikes towards the cranium of the Savage.

(Alright...!)

He felt an accurate response in his arms.

With the momentum, Hayato swings *Hien*, destroying the defense barrier, including the core.

He lands on the ground.

– President, are you okay?

Walking near Claire, Hayato reached out his hand.

– Yes, you did it nicely, Kisaragi Hayato. Besides... umm, you saved me.

While saying that, Claire grabs the hand that was presented to her.

– I was surprised because you suddenly fell down. Still, it's unexpected for the president to be careless.

– Wha...! Wh-what do you mean that I was careless desuno!? B-besides, if you weren't here, I would have cut my way through...

Despite saying so, Claire stands up, being pulled up by Hayato.

– I'm sorry for interrupting you.

He laughs with a *Ahaha*.

– ... nevertheless, you have grown quite a lot to have a fighting style like that mashitawane.

– It's an honor to receive such words.

Hayato cancelled the armament.

Next, Claire also cancels the armament.

– With this are six, correct?

Claire muttered, turning her eyes to the corpse of the Savage.

– More than that, what will you do with that mud? It's better to wash it away before returning to the tent, right?

– You are right desuwane, I can't get inside the tent like this.

– If so, shall we go to the lake mentioned by Claudia?

– Eh...

– In that case, you can wash it away, isn't it? If it's on this side, then that will do it.

– Yo-you are right desuwane...

– Is something wrong, president?

– N-no, I have something to do before that.

Saying that, Claire touched the *Vital Ring* of her arm.

– It looks like we still can't communicate desuwane.

Knitting her brows and looking troubled, Claire continues.

– For the time being, I have two transmitters masu. For now, I don't know whether these have a meaning of signal here or not, but let's set them up for now.

Claire soon began to set up on the ground the transmitters she took out of her pocket.

– We are *okay* with this desuwa.

– In that case, shall we go?

As they walk towards the lake for about 3 minutes, the trees covering overhead disappeared and the front of their eyes opened.

– Wow...

Hayato was at a loss for words because of the beautiful sight in front of his eyes.

That also goes for Claire.

– It's very gorgeous desuwane.

– Yes, it is...

The round moon floating in the sky without clouds and the stars spread all over the night sky are reflected on the lake surface. It's as if there are two skies. It's a very splendid sight, the two became speechless again.

– ——and, this is not the moment to watch the stars like this deshitawane. Because we have to get back to the tent fast.

While saying so, Claire took something like a test tube from the pouch.

– ... what's that?

– It's to make sure that the lake is not contaminated by harmful substances that came above ground with fragments of the falling meteorites desu. I think it's fine but, let's confirm it at once.

Claire scoops up water of the lake into the test tube.

Then, drops a chemical that she took out from the pouch, close the lid, and shakes it gently.

There's no change.

– Apparently, there's no problem if we enter the lake desuwa. Incidentally, the water is quite tepid desuwane.

– ... it's that so?

– Yes.

Hayato soaked his hand in the lake like Claire did.

– Yeah, it's tepid. It looks like a hot spring.

It's probably because Mt. Kongur is a volcano.

It seems that the lake being like a hot spring is due to the heat of the underground magma.

– If that's the case, I don't think there's a problem if I get soaked a little desuwa.

While saying so, Claire starts picking up branches of the trees that have fallen on the ground.

– Why are you doing that?

– To make a bonfire desu. Assuming that I wash the Variable Suit, it will be unpleasant to keep it wet desumono.

If it's a bit of water, then it can be dried using *sense energy*, but it looks like that can't be done if it's dripping wet.

Claire ignites with a tool she retrieved from the pouch the leaves and branches of the trees that she collected.

– Err, Kisaragi Hayato...

– What is it, president?

– ... do you intend to see the whole time how I bathe? And for now, I would like to take off my suit, so...

– Ah, I'm sorry!

Being glaring at by Claire with half-opened eyes, the flustered Hayato turned his back.

After a short time, he heard the sound that she was taking off her suit, his heart goes *Ba-dump Ba-dump*

Hayato tried to fiddle with his *Vital Ring* to distract his mind.

(If it's here, will it connect with someone?)

Speaking of results, it was useless.

He can't get in touch with either Claudia or the base camp.

With a *Splash*, the lake surface makes a sound.

Seems that Claire set foot into the water.

Of course, he can't see the lake (she'll get angry if I see), the figure of Claire who's soaking her body in the water is beyond the mind of Hayato.

Although an accident, he saw her breasts directly at the pool, and even though it was over her Variable Suit when he touched them, he can clearly imagine that figure.

– Kisaragi Hayato, how is the communication state desuno? It doesn't connect anywhere yet?

– Ah, well... umm, I attempted just now, but there's no change.

– I see desuno, I hope nothing strange happens but...

Claire, facing up and floating on the surface of the lake, muttered while gazing at the sky.

– Be that as it may, the stars are really beautiful desuwane...

– I agree, and there are no clouds.

Hayato answers, looking up at the sky.



The sky is full of stars as ever.

– Although we don't have time to relax, it's been a long time since I had a time like this, and it's really refreshing somehow desuwa.

– You mean, a time to watch the stars?

– There's that but, the communication doesn't come from anywhere, I mean, it's as if this wasn't related to work desuwa. Of course, we are on duty but.... This is like a ray of hope in the darkness masenwane.

Certainly, it's different however, being the case that Claire said it while slipping out a smile, he guesses that it's a joke of her.

– President, you seem to be always busy. Have you never thought of wanting to take a small break?

– To be honest, I have thought a little about it arimasuwa.

– Is that so?

– Is that surprising desuno?

– This, it's just that the president is also an ordinary girl who thinks about things like that...

– ... wha-what are you talking about masuno? Of course I am desuwayo. But I wished myself to live as the president of Little Garden desu. To be at the side of Liza——

Breaking her brief silence, Claire continued speaking.

– That's why I can't afford to be idling desuwa. For the sake of Liza, and for what Liza tried to protect——I am sorry. Telling you such a story so suddenly....

– I don't mind.

– ... it's true desuno?

– Yes. If the president feels at ease talking like this, then please talk as much as you like. I will absolutely tell nobody about this.

– You are a mysterious person desuwane.

– ... a mysterious person? What do you mean?

– I don't understand you well.

– Eh....

– That’s why you are a mysterious person desuwa.

Saying that, and slipping out a smile, Claire continued.

– Looks like that time has come desu.

– That time...?

– You said it before, don’t you? If that time comes, let’s have a talk.

Hayato remembers the day he met Liza.

There’s no doubt Claire said such a thing.

– Kisaragi Hayato, how much did you hear about Liza from my older brother desuka?

– Well, if I’m not mistaken, Liza is the younger sister of the president, she’s the motive power of Little Garden and about the thing that she’s a Slayer...

– Is that so desuka...? As my Onii-sama said, Liza is my little sister desuwa. But, she’s not an ordinary a human being, and it’s not an ordinary Slayer——

– That’s, no way...

– In your way talking, she’s what you call a Variant desuwa.

——A Variant.

That’s the word that raised to the surface of the mind of Hayato now.

– ... but, unlike you, Emile Crossford and Kirishima Sakura, Liza is, by nature, a <infected body> Variant nanodesu.

– A Variant by nature?

– Taking out the fertilized ovule, she injected improved body fluids of the Savage that were genetically modified to demonstrate superior intelligence and physical ability. Then it returned to my mother once again and gave birth to a 《Produced Child》—— to my little sister, Liza Harvey desuwa.

– No way, she did such a thing...

That story remembered him about Sakura and the three *hunters*. They were inoculated with an improved version of the body fluids of the Savage and



became infected——

– It's not Vitaly Tynyanov masenwayo.

– Wha, is that so?

It was a surprising answer, because he surely thought so.

– She was no more than an assistant, after all. Linis Harvey——my mother, was the one who took the initiative in technical development and forced the experiment.

– Then in short, she took out her own ovule and mixed it with the body fluids of the Savage? Why did she do such a...

– It seems that my mother used to say——that it was to win the battle against God desu.

Judal said something similar.

Is that the reason why, for this world, and for Warslan Company, she accepted to be the experiment body and gave birth to Liza Harvey in this world? It's said that the reaction value of the Hundred of Liza, since she was born, was beyond the value of Hayato when he entered the school.

Therefore, she received a gifted education as a Slayer from a very young age, and from the tender age of 10 years old, she was fighting the Savage in order to protect the Earth.

– But I didn't know that Liza was hiding the fact that she was training as a Slayer and that she was a Variant. But, when Liza was with me, there was a raid of the Savage desu.

Aside from Liza, Claire had also been training as a Slayer due to the high reaction value of the Hundred.

That's why she saw people who were hurt by the bombardment of the Savage, and thought of beating the Savage, so she deployed her own armament and faced the Savage.

– However, at that time I had never fought with the Savage. My handling skill of the Hundred wasn't great either deshitawa. Moreover, the Savage wasn't a regular type, but a large one.

As a result, Claire was driven to a predicament.

She dodged the attack of the Savage, but she was being pinned under a crumbled rock.

– Liza saw me and manifested her forbidden ability, deploying the armament with the momentum, and entered into battle with the Savage desu. She was able to defeat the Savage, but it was impossible for her to control the ability of the Variant—about the consequences, she spat out blood, collapsed, and lost consciousness desu.

Liza was protected afterwards by the people of Warslan who came running, but she hasn't wake up since then.

– And yet, she continues emitting a strong *energy* from her body desu. That's the reason why she's in that capsule desuwa. If Liza isn't inside that, she wouldn't be able to keep her life desuwa.

Claire told that, looking sad.

– In other words, that capsule has the meaning of “life-support system” of Liza... no, of the little sister of the president?

– ... it is as you say desuwa. The liquid contained in it has the function of weakening the development of the Variant Virus and the function of absorbing the *sense energy* released from the body of Liza to reduce it as nutrients desuwa. If there's a time when either of them is insufficient, Liza will—

– The facial expression of Liza becomes gloomier.

– But, the older brother of the president said that Liza is the power of Little Garden too...

– It means that we are using *energy* released from the body of Liza desuwa. It's not possible to return the released *energy* back to the body. Therefore, it was Charlotte Dimandius who came to Little Garden after the death of Linis and made the capsule and thought of a valid use of that power nanodesu.

The capsule is connected to a huge *Variable Stone*, transforming the *energy* of Liza into a huge force, making it part of Little Garden's motive power.

That was also a story he heard from Judal, the older brother of Claire.

– Now, as we talked about, the strength of Liza is enormous, even though she's sleeping— —but my Onii-sama and my father are using that power to not only take control of Liberia, but also to control everything in this world masu. I am the captain of Little Garden to monitor my father and Onii-sama so they don't use thoughtlessly the ability of Liza nanodesu. If that happens, that may have terrible consequences for Liza...

Saying that, Claire laughed at herself.

– ... in the end, I may not care a single bit about the world anyway masenwane.

– President...

– Liza, my precious little sister who saved my life again, I begged my mother that I wanted to have a little sister.... I might just wait for Liza to wake up. Do you despise this selfish Queen of Little Garden, no, this Claire Harvey?

– I absolutely not. I understand the feelings of the president well. As the president knows well, I'm similar to you.

It's not for this world.

He decided to become a Slayer and went to Little Garden for everyone who grew up in the institution that is in Yamato and for his little sister.

– Of course, there are times where I think that I can save this world with my own ability.

– Now that you mention it, we do are alike deshitawane.

Claire unintentionally lets out a smile.

But with a complete change, she turns her eyelids to the ground, looking sad — —

– Of course, I also want to overcome the fight with God and save this world masu. That was the hope of my mother, and for that, Liza must be released as well. But, that might be nothing more than a pipe dream. How much Savages are still on the Earth? We don't know from where in the space they are coming and why they are attacking the Earth. Even if such a situation in front of our eyes becomes pitch black, I believe we can walk ahead, because there are ideals

desu.

Saying so, Claire turned her eyes to the Hundred hanging from her neck.

– Besides, if we wish it strongly, the Hundred should respond to us desuwa. In that situation, the road will surely open. I have such a feeling desu.

– ... the Hundred, will respond? How?

– By the power of the human will, the Hundred changes its shape. Won't you lend us your strength?

Claire murmured, looking at Hayato while fixedly staring at the Hundred,

– Kisaragi Hayato, can I use a part of your ideals and of your strength, for my —for the sake of Little Garden?

– Of course.

Hayato answered firmly.

– I don't know how much helpful I will become for the president, but I will go and try as much as possible. I can do that much.

While listening the words of Hayato, Claire smiles broadly.

– Thank you. I'm looking forward to it from the bottom of my heart masuwa.

At that time, *Bip Blp*, the *Vital Ring* of Hayato made a sound.

– This sound is...

– It's an emergency call desuwa.

Following the splashing sounds that came from the water, the sounds of footsteps draw near.

– Kyaah!?

– Hee!?

Caused by rushing over in a haste, Claire tripped up on the sandy soil.

Although she didn't fall because of that, the overenthusiastically Claire assaults the body of Hayato.

– ... ah.

Becoming flustered, Hayato caught the body of Claire in his arms.

– President, are you okay... huh...?

Hayato embraced the soft, wet body of Claire from the front, and not only the nape of the neck ended up having such an appearance where many drops of water are running down like tracing it, but also the lines of her body composed of curves, which are very erotic.

(Besides, this is...)

One hand of Hayato was turned around the back, and the other hand was buried with his fingertips on the meat of her soft buttocks, to support her waist.

Only that, that was a very bad situation and the two soft, warm big masses of meat on her chest shake like a jelly, and as they are pressed against the chest of Hayato, their shapes change with a *munyu*.

– I’m sorry, I got a little impatient...

Claire raises her faces. The two, far from sighing, were getting closer until their distance was enough to make them hear the sound of their hearts.

– No, that’s...

Looking properly the face of Claire, she was overcoming with emotion due to the conversation of seconds ago, her eyes were red and became swollen.

He can even see rest of tears.

But, her facial expression seems to be accompanied by a unique lasciviousness, that made his heart beat fast.

– U-umm, well...

*What to do now?* Hayato was bewildered.

From her wet hair, a seducing aroma accompanied by charm flow into his nasal cavity.

As a matter of course, the sound of his heart goes *DOKU DOKU*, it beat furiously.

Naturally, his breathing becomes intense.

It's there that Claire finally noticed the situation in which she was situated.

– Kisaragi Hayato, what's wrong mashitano...? Ah...

The cheeks of Claire redden.

– I-I panicked all of sudden and...!

She tried to separate herself from Hayato while shouting, but she tripped up on the sandy soil again.

– Be careful, president!

Hayato reaches out his hand, trying to support her body, as she might fall if she keeps like that.

He grabs a narrow arm with one hand, and with the other hand——

– Ah...

As a result, following the feeling of a soft sensation in his palm, the existence of a firm protrusion is transmitted.

(O-oops...!)

He did it again. At the time of the duel, it was over the Variable Suit, but this time he touched it directly with his hand. Moreover, He's in a posture like holding and supporting the body of Claire with his knee.

This posture is close to what is called “carrying a lady in one's arms”.

– U-umm...

– Hyaah, fuah, nuuuh!

In order to confirm their existence, the fingers move naturally.

Claire shows a sensitive reaction to the movement that was like a caress.

Making her face blush, she was panting and enduring that while biting her lower lip.

– Ki-Kisaragi Hayato... you, nuh.... Where are you touching, hyan! T-this is not the moment to do something like this...!

Receiving the stimulation of the fingers of Hayato, the body of Claire was dominated by pleasure. *Haa haa*, the breathing that leaks from her mouth

becomes rough, the skin of her whole body becomes more reddish. Her eyes are also swollen in red, he can see the drops of tears on the edge of them, her body seems to be trembling, like if it was pulsating. While desperately subduing her seductive voice, Claire continues her words.

– Nn... ah... I-I'm telling you, get your hands off quickly! I-I can stand by myself already masuwayo!

– Ah...! I-I'm sorry!

Hayato takes his hands off the chest of Claire.

At that moment, his gaze was attracted to her chest.

Thereupon, the pink rings at the tip of the two swells and the bean-like protrusions at the center of them meet his eyes.

His line of sight come down as it was, and he was about to face a small bush of her lower body that had a trace of moisture——

– ... y-you s-saw my chest now, isn't it!?

Shouting, while hiding her chest with both hands, Claire crouched down on the spot.

– No, that's... just a bit, but.... Ah, apart from that president, please wear this for now!

– S-so you did see!

While turning his face, Hayato picked up the Variable Suit that was in the middle of getting dry and presented it to Claire who was still crouching down.

– ... b-but, thank you very much masuwa. I will change clothes soon, s-so, don't turn around! Besides, you will have to take proper responsibility for this masuwayo...!

– Ah, yes... of course, eh... ehh!?

– Wh-what's left is... to check if we can communicate somewhere now desu. Because the line finally connected!

– Ye-yes!!

When he noticed, the emergency call was gone.

However, there should be a history of incoming calls.

Hayato turns his back on Claire and verifies the *Vital Ring*.

Thereupon, the emergency call rang again.

– Err, it seems like it's a whole communication from D team. Can I connect with it?

– O-of course desuwa. Increase the volume, so I can hear it too.

– Understood.

– Hayato manipulates the *Vital Ring* with unfamiliar hands and connects to the whole communication.

But what he hears is jarring sounds mixed with noise.

– What's this desuno...?

– I don't know, the volume should be maximized properly.

He's thinking that the place is at fault, so Hayato left the trees and approached the side of the lake.

However, the situation doesn't change.

– I thought that it finally returned, but it seems that the communication status is still bad desuwane. Is the communication still in the connected state desuno?

When he noticed, Claire is right behind him.

Her hair is wet, but her clothes aren't wet anymore.

– Yes, it is, but.

– If so, then that's better than before desuwane.

Right after Claire said so.

[... hear, me...]

From the *Vital Ring*, the voice of a man slightly mixed with noise can be heard.

– President, just now...



– Yes, I heard the voice mashitawa.

However, they didn't hear the rest.

With an appearance like getting their bodies closer, they fixedly gazed at the *Vital Ring*.

– ... president, even if you don't get so close, you can hear if the communication connects, right?

– O-of course I know that masuwa!

The flustered Claire takes distance with Hayato.

With that, Hayato was relieved.

Still, when he looks at Claire, her hair is still wet, the dripping water flows through the nape of the neck, she looks very sexy, making him feel very excited.

There, a communication entered again.

[Can anyone hear me...! If you can hear me, please respond!]

The voice they hear mixed with noise is much clearer than before.

– This is E team, I am Claire Harvey of Little Garden desuwa. What's the meaning of this? What has happened!?

The voice of the man they heard is quite impatient, the enthusiasm of Claire also goes up.

Her voice became quite big.

[... Little Garden? But I'm glad it connected... I'm in D team, I'm Zayed Ayman]

Hayato and Claire looked at each other.

The communication has stabilized. However, his words weren't what Claire wanted. Claire urges him, looking impatient.

– Please explain the situation quickly. I don't know when the line will cut masenwa.

[R-right... while we were fighting the Savage, three hunters who had golden eyes and wore black Variable Suits suddenly appeared and attacked us...]

– What did you say!?

Claire raised a hysteric voice.

[As a result, I left D team, which was annihilated]

Once again, noise enters the communication.

At that time, what came to the mind of Hayato are the figures of the three guys that he met in the Zwei Islands.

– Your location, where are you desuno!?

[The location is——]

[I've found you, Al-Salaam...! We won't forgive the Slayers of Al-Salaam, you'll die for running away!]

[\*Shriek\*, please stop...! If you want the Hundred, you can take it, but please, my life...]

[Don't fool around!!]

[Guah!!]

Following the shrieks, the man whose body falls to the ground with a thud is heard from the *Vital Ring*.

[I, Nee-chan and Nakri and everyone who was with us at that time, even if they supplicate like that, we won't forgive them. You are Slayers, aren't you!!?]

The voice of another man resounded there.

There's some youth in his voice.

Then, the noise began to mix again, and the communication came to an end.

Although she's warping her face with a frustrating-like expression. Claire tried to make a direct connection with the man just now using the communication function of the *Vital Ring*, but it looks like she can't connect.

– The voice of now, was one of the hunters that appeared in the Zwei Islands, right?

– Their characteristics that you guys know and the features you heard in the communication are the same wayone.

– ... yes.

And, Hayato nods.

As he thought, the day when they came to the Qin Empire, were they the gang of three he saw in the street?

– If it comes to them, then maybe—no, given the situation, this connection malfunction may be due to the hunters masenwa.

– ... such a thing, is that possible?

– If it's Vitaly Tynyanov, then it shouldn't be difficult to make a jamming device that disrupts electromagnetic waves desu.

– In other words, does that mean that the communication will recover if we destroy the device that generates the jamming?

– Exactly desuwa. But, we don't know where it is, so it's impossible for now desuwane. What we should do now is to contact the other team members or join them, share the information about the *hunters* and elaborate countermeasures desu.

Claire immediately turned her feet towards the shed.

– Let's return to where everyone is.

The distance from the lake where Hayato and Claire are to the tent where Emile and the others are waiting is around 15 minutes on foot. If they run straight through the forest, they will arrive in 5 minutes or so.

The moment when Hayato and Claire attempted to run.

*SHYUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU...*

A pillar of light stood towering over the surrounding, going towards the sky.

– That's a...

Hayato asks, stopping his feet.

Stopping her feet in the same way, Claire replied.

– That must be without a doubt a Slayer. Instead of a beacon he bombarded, he must be trying to inform about his whereabouts masenwa.

The pillar has already disappeared.

It's been around 20 seconds since they were able to see it, but that was definitely due to the use of *energy*.

– That is to say, something is happening at that place, huh...

– The direction is close to the direction in which the D unit that communicated a while ago was searching desuwane. However, the color of that *energy*.... Isn't it the same as that of Fritz Grantz?

– Yes, it definitely is. Was the president also aware?

– Anyway, they must be asking for help masenwane. I will head to that place right away masu.

Claire muttered in order to resolve herself, took out the Hundred and grasped it tightly with her fist.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

Together with the shout, the body of the president is wrapped in red particles released from the ore and gets covered in armor, then gives form to six floating batteries around her.

– Kisaragi Hayato, I would like you to act as a messenger to Erika and the others masuwa.

– But, with one person...

The opponents are likely to be those three artificial Variants.

Can he let her go by herself?

– There's a possibility that our valued comrades of Little Garden are requesting help desu. I, as the president, should head there right away, don't you think? After you join with Erika and the others, please follow me. This is all, I will rely on you as the messenger masuwayo!

– President!!

Using *energy*, Claire accelerates towards the place where the pillar of light stood and goes through the gap of the trees.

Her back got smaller quickly.

For a moment, Hayato was wondering if he should go after her, but he told

himself that he should do what he must do now and ran towards the shed.

# Chapter 4: The Reason of the Hunters

## *Dragonfly* Simultaneous Attack

– With this, reinforcements should come soon...

The one who kicked the body of Fritz who fired a shot towards the sky while he lay down, was a girl with a Dancer type Hundred—— two ring-shaped weapons similar to chakrams, called *Duo Varga*, were held in her hands.

– This guy, having the nerve to do something stupid!

– Guh!

It was Nakri, one of the three hunters with dark brown skin who kicked and sent flying the body of Fritz again.

The armament of Fritz rolled over the ground and was cancelled. The *energy* of Fritz was almost completely empty and with that he fired a signal.

To his side and also disarmed is Latia, wearing her Variable Suit.

She was completely unconscious.

Aly Harlech of Al-Salaam and Wendy Velvet of Liberia, also members of the attacked D team, were unconscious too.

Nakri picked up the red ore of Fritz——his Hundred that was rolling near him.

– I’m ready with this. Only Krovahn remains with that girl.

– I know, I’m going to finish her soon.

Answers Krovahn, the only man of the gang of three who’s glaring at Liddy Steinberg, one of the vice presidents of Little Garden, who readied her Phalanx type Hundred, 《Jet Black Heavenly Spear》*Midgard Schrange*. A huge sword with two blades was held in his hand——he was grasping tightly his Crusher type Hundred, *Orthros Liberio*.

(Only a little more, if I can stand somehow or other then...)

Liddy readied the spear without moving, telling that to herself.

Even though some of them are aware of the existence of the hunters, they must have noticed that there are existing problems with communications, this going both to the HQ of the base and to the Slayers participating in the search-and-destroy operation.

There's no doubt that someone will see the shot of Fritz, realize that there's a problem occurring in this place and come running.

What she must do now is buy time—

However, the enemies are aware of what Liddy is trying to do, they seem to be cautious of that.

— We don't have much time, so we'll bring this to an end quickly!

Krovahn readied the weapon and kicks up the ground, slashing Liddy.

— ... kkuh!

Liddy wards off the swung downward blade with the shield on her left hand and launched an attack with the spear in her right hand.

But it was dodged by Krovahn who bent his body backwards.

— ORAA!

Krovahn slashes at her one more time.

Then, Liddy pierced the ground with the pointed end of the spear

— ——what!?

Krovahn is in commotion by the action he didn't anticipate.

Liddy rotates her body with the axis of the spear and kicked flying his body.

— Guh!

Krovahn falls to the ground with that, but he recovers immediately.

Although she was able to land a blow, it's just a kick, he received no damage.

Still, this should be giving her some time.

— You seem to be doing it better than that guy, huh.

Krovahn wiped the mud stuck on his face with the back of his hand.

Nakri was watching such situation laughs and ridicules him.

– Need some help, Krovahn?

– What are you saying? You know that I'm not going serious, don't you?

– I know.

Nakri suspends her mouth and grins, showing an ominous smile.

In the same way, Krovahn laughs.

– ... well, it's time to go all out. We really don't have time.

Together with the murmur, the black eyes of Krovahn starts to emit a golden brilliance.

– ... *limit out*.

Murmuring, the speed of Krovahn who holds the weapon increased, it was rising dramatically compared up to now.

– Oraah!

The power of the twin blade that is swung downward has also become quite strong.

(kkuh...! So this what a guy with the strength of the Variant is, huh...)

The best and only thing she can do is ward off the attacks.

She doesn't have time or the like to counterattack nowhere.

Now, if the remaining two people assist him, this won't be settled....

No, to be frank, as things are...

– You put quite a fight, however——

Krovahn strongly stepped on one of the edges of the twin blade, grazing the ground.

– ——!?

She thought that it was an overenthusiastically miss attack, but she immediately realized that it wasn't so.

That's because a lump of mud approached her face instantly.



(Dammit, this is what he was aiming for...!)

The mud sticks, and Liddy is plunged into darkness.

– This is the end!

She can't do anything if her visibility goes black.

Feeling that the blade of *Orthros Liberio* of Krovahn approaches, Liddy prepared herself.

Immediately afterwards, along with an explosion sound, the sound that the body of a human hits the ground reached the ear of Liddy.

– Kuh, the hell was that just now!?

The next she heard was the voice of Krovahn.

(What on earth happened?)

Although she couldn't grasp the situation because her visibility was blocked, someone appeared, there, she was able to understand that she was saved.

(Is that perhaps, Claire-sama...?)

Expecting that in her heart, Liddy wipes the mud of her face with her arm.

What she saw was the figure of Krovahn who's about to stand up.

Two beams were fired there.

Krovahn avoided them while rolling and pointed his eyes to the place where the beams were fired. Like him, Liddy also pointed her eyes to that place.

Two floating batteries are suspended there——

– Damn, where are you!?

– I am here desuwayo.

– ——kuh!?

That voice came from the top of a tree.

In response to the voice of Claire, Krovahn gazed at the surroundings, but it was too late.

Claire, who had descended from the top of the tree by jumping, trampled

down on his body.

– Guah!

Krovahn screamed.

The eyes that were shining returned to black.

– ... president!!

Liddy raised a spontaneous delighted voice, she was longing for a partner to make their entry.

– Who are you, you bastard!? Get away from Krovahn!

Nakri throws one of the rings of *Duo Varga* towards Claire.

Claire stopped the blow, catching it with one of her hands.

– I am the Student Council President of the Academy-City Ship Little Garden, Claire Harvey desuwa. It seems that you heavily tormented my comrades not only once but twice desuwane.

After a glance at Fritz and Latia who collapsed, she glares at Nakri and Nesat again in that order and turns two muzzles of the six floating batteries to Krovahn in order to threaten him to not move.

Nakri and Nesat who saw that, gritted their teeth and scowled at Claire with a bloodcurdling facial expression.

– Now, I have questions for you masu. They are about Vitaly Tynyanov desu.

– ... kh.

The moment that name came out, Nakri showed discomposure.

Both Krovahn and Nesat are the same.

– ... looks like when limiting it to the reaction I am seeing, you know about Vitaly desuwane.

– That's why we're not going to say anything!

Nakri shouted.

In order to admonish them, Claire continues.

– Release from your combat readiness, surrender immediately and provide information about Vitaly desu. By doing so, we will overlook the matter of the Zwei Islands and the matter of now.

– Don’ screw with us! Like hell we are going to believe the words of some guys of Warslan! Besides, that arrogant attitude of yours towards us is detestable!

Nakri accelerates, kicking up the ground. Claire uses two of the six floating batteries and tried to stop her feet by firing beams.

But she dodges them by moving quickly to the left and right, closes the distance with Claire and raises overhead the ring, slashing at her.

Then Claire pushed out her left hand and deployed an E *barrier*, she stopped the blow of Nakri just in front of her.

– Wha...

Claire cancels the E *barrier* right away.

Throwing towards Nakri one of the rings of *Duo Varga* that she was holding in her right hand, her body was sent flying to the distance.

– Nakri!

Looking the figure of Nakri that crumbled down after colliding with a wall of rock, Nesat showed a flustered look and immediately opened the eyepatch, a golden eye appeared. She murmured as she looked at the Hundred of Krovahn who was showing an expression of anguish at the feet of Claire.

– ... 《Duplication Deployment!》 *HUNDRED ON!*

Understanding, disassembly, reconstruction— —

The report of Hayato and the others suggests that her ability is based on those three points.

In fact, she emits a long straight pillar of light towards the sky from her eye, that creates a twin blade with a shape similar to the one owned by Krovahn at the feet of Claire, and slashed at her.

Claire attempts to intercept it using two of the six floating batteries.

But she wasn’t able to dodge it.

While defending against it with an E *barrier*, she assaulted her as she was.

(What the...!)

While deploying the weapon, Claire noticed that the eye hidden in her eyepatch shines with a golden color.

(Did she release the strength of the Variant desuno?)

It seems that the intensity of the *barrier* is increasing.

What to do? Claire hesitates.

The twin blade that she brandished is shining with *energy*.

It will be impossible to stop that blow.

However, if she moves, she will confer freedom to the boy at her feet.

Krovahn began to move as if he had sensed such hesitation of Claire.

He released the strength of the Variant and got up with a jump.

Then picked up *Orthros Liberio* that had fallen on the ground.

– ... kuh!

Without a moment's delay, Claire shot beams towards the boy using the floating batteries.

He avoids them while rolling on the ground and as soon as he gets up, he slashes at Claire.

– Take this!

– Such a thing won't hit me masenwa!

Claire jumped to dodge it and once again aimed at Krovahn with the floating batteries and fired the beams with decision.

Nakri launched an attack there.

– Don't forget about me!

Looking back in response to the voice, her eyes were also shining with a golden color.

That means that the ability of the Variant was released.

(It will be difficult if it continues like this desuwane...)

If the opponents are the three guys who released the power of the Variant, then this won't be a situation where she can think of leaving enough spare *energy* to search tomorrow.

– ... it cannot be helped masenwa, now that it has become to this, I will go with everything I have too masu.

Claire distracts the three hunters using the six floating batteries and took distance as she declared that she decided so.

– ... going seriously? In other words, you are saying that you weren't serious all this time?

Krovahn frowns the part of the eyebrow closes to the nose.

– Exactly desuwa.

An intense light was emitted from the body of Claire.

Then, her armor becomes thicker and the *railguns* of both arms become bigger.

– That's, no way...

– ... full, armament?

Nesat shows confusion and Nakri stares in wonder.

Without a moment's delay, Krovahn yells in order to give encouragement to those two girls.

– ... you said full armament, huh. But we are three. That's nothing for Nakri and Nee-chan! We can do it!

– Yup, I'll do it...

– ...let's, do it...!

Kicking up the ground at the same time, the three hunters attack.

Claire flutters in the night sky like a butterfly while green particles fall as if dancing, dodging the attacks, then tries to counterattack using the six floating batteries and the railguns of both arms.

– Guh...!

Immediately after the twin blade slashed the air, a beam emitted from one of the floating batteries hits Krovahn.

– «Small Floating Batteries!» *Petals!*

Claire launched small floating batteries from the six floating batteries and attacked the three guys.

– Kuh, although the beams of those petty things can be sustained, the floating batteries over there are a huge hindrance...

– Krovahn, can you take care of them?

Nesat turned her eyes to rely on Krovahn.

Nakri also turns her eyes in a similar way.

– ... let's see.

Krovahn gazed at Claire, narrowing his eyes and stood 10 meters ahead.

– What is it mashitano? If it's about giving up or you want to discuss about it, then the answer should come out right away desuwayo.

At that time, Krovahn noticed drops, that is, that it began to rain, then he showed a grin and whispered into the ears of the two girls.

– Nee-chan, Nakri, looks like luck is with us. I thought of something good.

Naturally, Claire was noticing the falling rain.

(... this has become a trouble mashitawane)

Rain is like a natural enemy for the Dragoon type Hundred users.

Although it doesn't make it unusable like the flames, the power of the beam attacks by *energy* is weakened.

(It would be nice if those three surrendered, however...)

Unfortunately, the trio goes into a huddle in front of her, they seem as if they were kneading something like a plan.

Even if Claire is confident that she can cope with any kind of plan they come up with, she wanted to avoid drawn-out battles.

Because Claire is aware that if the fight keeps dragging on and dragging on, she doesn't know what will happen. And the *energy* will be consumed pointlessly.

(If only Kisaragi Hayato and the others hasten to come to this place...)

In that case, it will be advantageous for them in terms of numbers, and because Erika is a chain user, she should be able to arrest the three guys—

The three hunters separate and look up at Claire floating in the sky.

– Do you finally have the intention to surrender?

When Claire asks them in order to provoke them,

– AS IF!

Nakri throws *Duo Varga* of both hands in succession.

– ... *HUNDRED ON*.

Nesat also created rings similar to *Duo Varga* and threw them in a similar way.

But none of them went past a place far away from Claire's body.

(... what are those girls doing?)

She guessed that they would start attacking by changing the direction in the middle of it like a boomerang, but that wasn't the case.

A total of four rings were aiming at the floating batteries that are floating at the side of Claire respectively.

– ... wha, not me, but the floating batteries!?

Four floating batteries are destroyed.

Nakri grabs *Duo Varga* that came back and throws them towards the two remaining floating batteries.

With that, all the floating batteries have been destroyed.

– Kuh...!

Claire is disturbed due to the situation that she hadn't hypothesized. Krovahn started an offensive there.

– Your body is now defenseless, huh!?

Panicking, Claire uses the small floating batteries that remained and began an attack pointing to the gang of three.

However, looks like they don't have an effect on the defensive walls since the beams of the small floating batteries have lost output due to rain.

– Something like this is insignificant!

– If so, then with this!

Claire accelerates, having the weapons at the ready and turns the railguns of the arms towards the approaching Krovahn.

– Too slow!

– ——kuh!

Prior the bombardment, the brandish of *Orthros Liberio* hit directly the body of Claire.

– Kyaaaaa!

Claire falls towards the ground while screaming.

Watching such state, Nakri exclaimed.

– Hooray!

However, despite crashing on the ground violently, and that she lost her 6 floating batteries and her 12 *petals*, Claire's consciousness is still there, and the state of full armament is also up.

– ... kkuh!

Claire tries to stand up while staggering.

There, Krovahn was pressing her.

– I'll put an end to this!

5 meters, 3 meters, while shortening the distance with Claire, he readies the twin blade.

At that moment, a dazzling light successfully covered her.



– ... wh-what the!?

Their field of view is blocked by a white curtain.

At the same instant, Claire thought.

(This is the flash bullet of Erika desuwa!)

Claire knows that she is carrying flash bullets.

There's no doubt with that.

The guess turns into conviction.

It's because the figure of Krovahn was reflected, his body was wrapped around by a pink chain.

– Dammit, what the hell is this!?

Krovahn tries to escape from the chains by twisting himself.

But he couldn't tear off the chain. On the contrary, more tightening will only make it stronger.

– It's futile. You cannot escape easily from my 《Chains of Absolute Fate》*Everlasting*.

A voice echoes from the top of a tree near them.

– Who are you!?

The line of sight of Krovahn is directed to the end of the chain that is wrapped around his body.

– I am Erika Candle, one of the vice presidents of Little Garden. Claire-sama, we have come to help.

The glasses girl, standing on a thick branch of the tree, answered.

Kisaragi Hayato was standing next to her, then jumps off from the tree and rushes to the position of Claire. He already deployed his simple armament, he's holding *Hien* in his hand.

– President, are you alright?

– Kisaragi Hayato...

– Of course, I am here too.

– Me too.

With those voices Claire noticed the existence of Emile and Claudia——the two other members of the same E team.

Of course, both of them have deployed their armaments.

On top of that, Emile has a rapier that was created with *Arms Shroud* and aimed at the base of the throat of Nakri from behind and Claudia was holding down Nesat on the ground, coiling around the neck the chain of *Tudor Rose*.

– Impossible, I never thought that this would happen by trying to stick together Kisaragi Hayato and Claire Harvey.

Claudia continues her words while smiling wryly.

– I really want to apologize, but for now, let's do something about these hunters.

Erika is overlooking the hunters from the top of the trees and opened her mouth.

– Claire-sama, I leave everything to you.

– Understood mashitawa.

Replying, Claire shouts.

– «Floating Batteries, Revive!» *Resurrection!*

Then, by deploying something called a magic square, that emits green light at her feet and from that same thing six floating batteries rise to the surface, they were resurrected.

– You can't do anything in this situation, don't' you agree? We also have the advantage in numbers desuwa. Please surrender.

When Claire says so, the whole body of Krovahn trembles with anger while spitting up with a grisly facial expression.

– There's no way we can do that.

– ... what do you mean desuno?

Claire knits her brows.

– From the situation, you thought that we can't do anything, but the thing is that we can break free. A bit more and we can obtain freedom, how can we give up in a place like this!?

– Wha...!

Claire stares in wonder.

Because it seemed that the golden eyes of Krovahn shone even more violently, he was able to tear off the pink chain.

At the same time, his throat vibrates furiously and accelerates, having *Orthros Liberio* at the ready.

He's after Claire.

For a second, Emile and Claudia had their eyes fixated on the change of Krovahn.

As they aimed at that gap, Nakri and Nesat also moved.

Nakri squatted and knocked aside the legs of Emile.

– Uwaa!?

A leg raises, then Emile completely loses the balance of her body and Nakri slashes at her with *Duo Varga*.

– Take this!

Emile does a back step and dodges the ring but Nakri recovered her freedom with that.

Almost simultaneous with that sort of series of flows.

Nakri took a glance at Claire,

– ... *Hundred On*.

With a murmur, she creates six floating batteries similar to Claire.

Then, she moved two of them behind Claudia and fired beams.

– Wha, from behind!?

Claudia receives damage on the back of her head and collapses from the front.

Nesat became free with that and turns her line of sight to Krovahn.

– AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

While Krovahn roars, he was trying to slash again at Claire who had been accelerating and dodging the attacks, then attempted to bombard him with the railguns of her hands.

Not only from the weapons but also from her whole body the *energy* is overflowing.

– President, leave this to me!

Although the six floating batteries were resurrected, Hayato concluded that the wounded Claire shouldn't be the one that has to keep company with the opponent, so he started an offensive with *Hien* pointing at Krovahn.

– You, the one of some time ago, get out of the way!

Krovahn noticed Hayato and swings down *Orthros Liberio*.

The two blades hit each other, making a fierce sword fight sound.

– You okay, Hayato...?

Emile glanced at Hayato who's stacking up swords with Krovahn and glared with a change in her line of sight to Nakri who confronts her.

– I have to deal with this soon in order to go and help Hayato.

Saying so, she changed most of her *Arms Shroud* into a long, thin sword and started releasing a blow, then another one to the approaching Nakri.

– Haa, such a thing!

Nakri closes the distance while repelling the swords that face her with *Duo Varga* and released an offensive against Emile.

However, Emile jumped and evaded it nimbly, then grabbed one of the swords floating around her body and stabbed it in the hole of the ring of Nakri.

– What... the!?

Stabbing through it, the point of the sword buries in the ground.

Because of that, the movement of Nakri is completely stopped.

Emile took another sword in the air as she was and stabbed a sword in the hole of the other ring. The point of the sword buries in the earth in the same way.

– Shit!

She moves the ring, trying to pull out the sword, but she can't do it. The sword is quite long and is buried deep in the ground.

– You can't move unless you get away from those weapons... or I'll skewer you like them.

All the pointed end of the 10 swords floating in the air are directed to Nakri.

– Kuh.... If you are going to do it, then do it fast!

– Alright. Just kidding!

The moment Emile pulled the arm, all the swords return to particles in a blink of an eye.

– Wha...!

Nakri, who was loading strength on both arms, lost the balance of her body and was about to fall.

– Of course, I can't afford to liberate you, but I won't kill you either.

Without a moment's delay, Emile covered her fist with a *knuckle* she produced with *Arms Shroud* and thrust it into the abdomen of Nakri.

– ... ack!

The body of Nakri bent in a < shape and flies in the air.

– Sorry.

Without a pause, Emile does a turning kick and sent flying the body of Nakri to a wall of rock.

With that, her *vital* came to an end.

The armament of Nakri was cancelled, *Duo Varga* also falls to the ground and

vanished.

– Nakri!!

– It's no good if you look away!

– ... kuh!

Nesat avoids *Tudor Rose* that was strongly swung downward and attacks with the floating batteries.

– I won't let you!

Emile exclaimed, generating a rapier with *Arms Shroud* that destroys right in half the floating batteries of Nesat that attempted to bombard Claudia.

– ...!

Nesat looks dumbfounded at the floating batteries that are scattering as particles.

However, she immediately pulls herself together and began an offensive against Emile with the remaining floating batteries.

But Emile dodges them nimbly with a jump and by using *Arms Shroud* in the air she destroys all the floating batteries while changing weapons one after another.

– Looks like it's my win, don't you think?

Emile landed on the ground and generates a sharp rapier once again then moved forward to the base of the legs of Nesat.

– *Hundred On*—

Nesat turned her line of sight towards the rapier of Emile that was approaching and attempted to duplicate it.

However, Emile returned the weapons back to particles.

Because of that, she couldn't replicate it.

– Unlike me, you can't create weapons freely, and even if you deploy what you see, it doesn't look like you can move right away, don't you? Besides, you can't reproduce a special Hundred like my *Arms Shroud*.

When she noticed it, the distance between them is less than one meter.

Emile once again created a rapier and turned the pointed tip of it towards the eye of the girl.

– If I pierce your eye with this, you won't be able to duplicate anymore, am I right?

– ... my eye, you will crush it....?

– For the sake of what are you using your eyes?

– Eh?

– To kill people? Or to see your loved ones and the beautiful world? If it's the latter, then surrender. Together with the boy over there. I don't want to crush that eye.

Emile points her line of sight at Krovahn.

– What beautiful world, huh!? We haven't seen nothing but despair! Why are you getting in our way!? A little more, only a little more! A little more and we'll be released——we'll be free!!

– ——kuh!!

Krovahn's *Orthros Liberio* shines like a black flame and starts pressing down the body of Hayato.

Hayato was frantically holding him back with *Hien* loaded with *energy*.

Eventually, the shining of the *sense energies* of the two began to wrap not only the armament and weapons, but also the whole bodies of each other.

(Huh, what is, this...?)

At that time, pain runs in the head of Hayato, and images came to the front, burning into his memory.

The figures of a boy and a girl who carry bags that seem to be heavy are listening the orders of an adult man.

(... those two are...)

Stuck-up and pointed black hair, black eyes and dark skin.

They are quite younger than now, but there's no doubt that the boy in front of his eyes is Krovahn and that the taller girl is Nesat.





It was a man who worn military uniform, and a little older than Hayato and

the others, who's swinging a whip.

His skin color is the same as theirs, and he has Middle East features.

Looking closely at him, the military uniform has the insignia of Al-Salaam and a red ore is hanging on his neck.

Looks like the military man is a Slayer.

There is a large number of children beside them in that place, and like the two of them, they were carrying bags and things like shackles were on their hands and feet.

And they were struck with the same whip when their pace gets slower.

(Why, such a terrible thing...)

He was treating the children like slaves.

Something like that can't be forgiven.

– Come on, walk quickly!

The soldier swings the whip to Nesat whose step is tottering.

– ... aah!

– Nee-chan!

Krovahn rushes to the girl who's struck with a whip and crumbled down to the ground.

– Nee-chan, are you alright, Nee-chan!?

– You son of a bitch, why are you moving away from your position!?

The man raised overhead the whip again.

– ... kuh!!

While trying to protect the girl, Krovahn received the whip on his back and stared at the man who's looking down on them.

Maybe it was because he was unable to stomach such attitude, the man swung the whip again.

(Why am I seeing these things?)

While wondering, Hayato stops the tempestuous attack that Krovahn released.

Then again, *sense energy* was released from the two people and were surrounded by an intense light as far as the eye can see.

The *energies* of the two integrate as if to connect the two Variants.

And, images come to the mind of Hayato again.

The figures of the boy and the girl running through the wilderness at midnight.

Just like before, it's the childhood of Krovahn and Nesat.

It seems that they were living in a facility where the ones who lost their parents by the raids of the Savages are gathered.

However, that wasn't just an orphanage, as it was established by Al-Salaam Company, a Middle East company commissioned by the Kingdom of Khmer to redevelop the areas destroyed by the Savages. They used the children who gathered as slaves, turning them in working force. Life in that place was like hell.

Therefore, Krovahn and Nesat were trying to escape from the facility.

(There's no choice but to do this. Otherwise, we'll be killed someday!)

However, they were found by a soldier who was patrolling near the entrance before leaving the premises.

Not all was turning dark, since the enemy doesn't seem to be a Slayer, but he has a gun in his hand.

Becoming disconcerted, they started running.

*BANG*, a gunshot attacks their ears.

The pursuer fired a bullet.

They saw the soil sprung up far away.

However, his gun skill wasn't good.

When they looked back and confirmed his position, their distance was still

sufficient.

They were way luckier, the soldier was growing fat, his legs were slow.

Krovahn leaves the site from the pathway that wasn't locked while he pulled the hand of Nesat.

Nonetheless, the soldier continued following them.

He really doesn't want to let them escape.

Whether he intends to intimidate them or stop them by shooting them to death, he has already fired 3 times.

Escapees and pursuers.

The distance increases gradually, but after three minutes or so, Nesat falls down all of a sudden.

– ... are you okay?

Thinking that a bullet hit her, Krovahn rapidly checked the leg of Nesat.

– ... y-yeah... I'm fine there, but... it hurts here...

– Ah...

Noticing that the eyelid of Nesat who raised her face is dyed red, Krovahn grimaces. When he saw the ground, he could see a pointed stone. He guesses that it hit her eye.

Krovahn looks back and checks the position of the pursuer.

The distance has shortened considerably this time.

Moreover, the pursuer has a gun at the ready.

He should still have bullets.

There's no time to treat her wound.

– ... shit!

Muttering as if spitting out, he asks Nesat.

– Nee-chan, can you run?

After confirming that Nesat nodded, Krovahn pulled her hand once again and

ran in the direction of a settlement that had a lot of remaining debris of the destroyed buildings that were overrun by the Savages at the time of the *Second Attack*.

If it's there, they should be a place to hide.

His thinking was correct and in the lined up abandoned buildings, it was possible to find a gap where they could hide.

– We'll hide here.

After Nesat went inside first, and collecting the rubble to hide themselves, Krovahn went inside.

What's left is to trust their chance.

They'll be lucky if they aren't found, but if they are found, he can only fight with a knife he stole from the facility.

For the time being, Krovahn decided to wrap a bandage he made by cutting a part of the tunic he wore on the eye of Nesat.

It's a *simplish* treatment but it can't be helped.

The other things that he can do now is to grasp tightly, firmly and strongly the only weapon he has, keep an eye to the situation of his surroundings, steel himself and protect Nesat, his older sister, who sleeps next to him.

However, without being able to win against the sleepiness that visited him, Krovahn eventually fell asleep like Nesat.

The next morning, with the sunlight coming from the gap of the rubble, Krovahn woke up., he realized that he was sleeping, but they weren't found by the pursuer.

He doesn't feel that there's anyone nearby. Krovahn decided to leave from the abandoned building together and wakes up Nesat. Outside of the settlement that was overrun by the Savages and collapsed, one side of it is a desert area.

When walking for 3 hours on the opposite side of the facility where they were in the past, he could see something like smoke going up slightly towards the sky.

Maybe there's a settlement over there.

With expectations in his heart, the two of them who are in a worn-out state advance in the desert despite their slow pace.

Before long, the settlement was clearly visible, but they can't be relieved yet. Because the settlement isn't necessary not under the control of Al-Salaam.

If so, they'll be put back in the facility and forced to do slave labors.

Or, they get caught and are killed as an example—keeping Nesat to wait in a safe place, Krovahn decided to investigate the situation of the settlement. Apparently, in the settlement, people of the same race as the two of them live there and looks like they aren't under the control of Al-Salaam.

A relieved Krovahn visited the settlement with Nesat and requested a meeting with the chief of the settlement.

However, he thought that the people of the settlement would be naturally suspicious of two dubious kids who appeared in the settlement all of a sudden.

He was cautious, but hey managed to have a meeting with the chief.

There, Krovahn explained the circumstances they were placed in. And, he tells why he left the children's home.

Then the people of the settlement treat them cordially and gave them water and food.

Moreover, they were also protected for a while in this settlement.

The two of them could finally calm down.

— ... what happened with the eye?

Inquired by the chief, Krovahn tells that she ended with that injury because she fell down in the middle of their escape from the facility.

— If so, we will take you to a doctor who is staying in a settlement near us tomorrow.

With the arrangement of the chief, and as it was decided, the two headed to the settlement around 10 kilometers away from the settlement they visited.

There was a woman in white robe with big dark circles under her eyes and

that has long ruffled hair in the basement of that place.

Apparently, this questionable woman is a doctor. Next to her, there's a woman with a strange mask.

– ... so, what happened to your eye?

Inquired by the woman in white robe and just like yesterday, Krovahn starts talking about the whole story.

That they have escaped from the children's home.

That she was injured on the way.

Because the woman was very suspicious, she was hesitant at the beginning, but she thought that it's more important to see the eye of Nesat now, so she talked firmly.

– In other words, you guys have a grudge against the Slayers?

After she finished listening to him, the masked woman said so.

Of course, Krovahn nods.

– I dislike Slayers. They aren't humans. They try to oppress humans, using the power they obtained. Because they say "we are the only ones who can win against the Savage", they do as they please—

– ... then, it would be great if you have strength too. If you gain strength, then you can get your revenge. After all Al-Salaam, and this world are—

– But, because the Hundred doesn't react to me...

– There's a way.

The masked woman said.

– Eh, that way is—

– I will grant you just that.

That's what the woman in a white robe said next.

Standing up, she headed towards Nesat.

Then she removed the bandage of the head and looked into the eye that became red.

– This is very bad. If this keeps like this, she will completely lose the vision.

– That's...

The front of Krovahn turns pitch dark.

That means that it's impossible to treat her.

– But, if it's me, I might be able to give her vision. However, that requires a strong will and sacrifice.

– ... will and sacrifice?

– To have your own goals and wish strongly for them. And to throw away your humanity. If she does that, her eye may heal, and she will be on par with the Slayers—no, she may get more power than them.

– Is that true?

– It's true.

Saying so, the woman in white robe continued.

– —do you want strength?

Words weren't necessary between the two people who look at each other's faces.

Krovahn nods, Nesat also nods and continues.

– If so, I will give you strength and freedom. On the other hand, you are going to help us with my work for a while, but you are fine with that, right?

The masked woman who's listening to that interview smiled broadly.

After that, the juveniles rescued a girl named Nakri from the claws of Al-Salaam. She's a girl who's a relative of the siblings and who fell into similar circumstances than them, then she was made into an artificial Variant by the mysterious woman Vitaly and they fight to become free together—they continue fighting for revenge against the Slayers.

(How is that I can see something like this...?)

Hayato doesn't know how is that he can experience his memories.

He wonders if his thoughts are being transmitted due to the *energy*.



Or is it because of the ability of the Variant?

However, it seems that nothing is visible to Krovahn.

– The hell is wrong with you!? There’s a reason why we absolutely have to win! Do you even have that!!?

While yelling, Krovahn keeps striking hard.

– ... I do.

Hayato answered firmly.

His little sister.

Everyone in the institution in Yamato.

He has a promise he just made with the president.

And of course, **Emilia** as well— —

To protect his precious people.

In order to not be separated from them.

– That’s why I can’t lose! I can’t lose!

– ——kuh!!

In response to the cry of Hayato, the blade of *Hien* that increased its radiance became gigantic.

Eventually the light wrapped around Hayato’s body as well, creating an armor that covered his whole body.

– No way, this guy has also full armament— —

– In order to protect my precious people, to make a beautiful world where everyone can be happy without getting injured, I— —will fight!

– Such a thing is settled to be impossible! Where everyone is in a happy world, that’s— —

– But if you don’t want it, then that absolutely won’t happen. That’s why, I wish for it! Such a happy world— —

Hayato’s eyes shone golden.

With the blade of *Hien* that went huge, the body of Krovahn revolves in the air.

– ... damn...!!

Krovahn was thrown to the ground and fell to the surface but stands up while making a wry face as if he was frustrated.

– ... how I, against such a guy...! Why the will of this guy is stronger? Does it mean that I lost my way?

The feet of Krovahn who spat out in vexation were staggering.

He's no longer in a state where he can fight properly.

– Nakri, Krovahn, in this situation we can't do anything. So...

– Nee-chan, don't give up! We aren't going to surrender!

– Krovahn...

– We are going to win——we'll win, we'll win, the freedom in our hands...!!

*Energy* begins to overflow from the body of Krovahn, it's like a flame that burns brightly. But——

– Ku, haah...!

He vomited red blood from his mouth.

– Please stop! If you keep using the power of the Variant, your body will...

– I know that! I still can fight, I can fight!

Putting *energy* on his whole body again, Krovahn starts an offensive against Hayato.

Erika muttered, looking at him.

– Is he completely overwhelmed by the strength of the Variant?

– The strength of the Variant...?

Claudia twists her head.

But this is not the case for an explanation.

– I will stop him masuwa.

Claire, who was biting her upper lip, tried to fire a floating battery against Krovahn.

Immediately after that—

*SPLAAAAAAAAASH!*

**\*TN: sfx is: zabaaaaan....!**

Suddenly, a loud sound of a splash of water resounded all over the area.

— ... what was that desuno?

Not only Claire, but even Krovahn stopped his feet by reflex and turned his line of sight to the direction of the sound.

— What in the world...?

— Kisaragi Hayato, look at that.

Claire was looking at the night sky with a surprised expression and said so to Hayato who muttered.

Doing as she told, Hayato looks up at the night sky.

There is a dragonfly that has 4 enormous wings and a pair of eyes that shine dazzlingly, it's a living thing that is floating and resembles a dragon.

— Why is there dragon-like thing in a place like this...?

— ... you are wrong, Hayato. That's not a dragon, it's a Savage. Look at the thing on the head.

— Well, I get that but...

The color and the pattern of the body is the same as the Savages he has met so far.

In addition, the head at the end of the long neck has a golden shining *shelter*, in which the core can also be seen inside.

— ... if I'm not mistaken, there should be a huge lake that was made by the fall of a meteorite where that Savage is floating desuwayone.

— That means that the dragon-like Savage appeared from that lake?

– Taking into consideration the circumstances, that’s the only thing I can conclude. Erika, what do you think?

– Even if I say something.... I can’t access the database now, but actually I heard about the existence of the Savage which is flying in the sky...

The Savage, which looks like a dragon and a dragonfly combined, roared with its head facing a higher height.

Their whole bodies tremble, it’s fierce.

Next, it starts to gather light in the mouth.

– Don’t tell me that it will fire a bombardment masuno...!?

Hayato and co. aren’t in the direction that it’s pointing to.

– I am sure that B team is...

Immediately after Erika said that, the Savage fired a bombardment to the ground without stopping.

A thick beam is fired from the head and strikes the ground.

The ground shook with a fiery explosion.

– You’re kidding, right...?

Even from this place, they can see that a part of the forest was completely erased.

The surroundings of the space that was suddenly opened in the forest were intensely burning with flame, and even a part of the darkness is stained red.

– That power is dreadful, don’t you think? We have to do something and fast...

– I get that, but...

Claire turned her eyes to the gang of three.

They haven’t ended with them yet.

– You’re the president-san of Little Garden, right? Why don’t we have a deal?

– A deal? And about what desuno?

Narrowing her eyes, Claire gazes at Krovahn.

– We'll defeat the Savage. And you'll give us the core.

– The core? What are you saying—

– We'll return the Hundreds of the others. What do you think? The core of that guy is pretty huge. If it's that one, we'll sure be free.

Krovahn took out the pouch from his pocket and scattered the Hundred they stole from the UN Peacekeeping Slayers who are participating in this operation to the ground.

– Even though you are saying such a thing, you are on the verge of being controlled by the Variant Virus now desuwayo. If you keep using the ability of the Variant, your body won't make it masenwa!

– I'll be able to manage it somehow or other. I can still do it. Watch properly how I show the evidence of that!!

Krovahn shouted, his eyes changed from black to golden color and shone powerfully. Black *energy* is beginning to rise up not only from *Orthros Liberio* in his hand, but also from the whole body. However, his steps are wobbling, they aren't settled yet. He also distorts his facial expression, looking like he's in pain.

– Stop, really! Leave that Savage to us, to Little Garden—

– Impossible. I can do it. I can do it! And then, we'll be free—

Krovahn kicked up the ground and accelerated towards the dragon-shaped Savage—the dragonfly type.

– Stop, Krovahn!

Nesat yelled, but he never stopped. While raising a great war cry, he heads towards the dragonfly type.

– ... he's already in a frenzy state. He lost his discernment.

That's the calm analysis of Erika.

– What do we do, Claire-sama?

– I don't know what to do either...

In such a situation, if she could knock it down with the floating batteries and capturing it with the *Everlasting* of Erika.

– ... let's see the situation a little.

Claire muttered as if she had given up.

– But that thing is dangerous, isn't it...?

Emile put her hand on the shoulder of Hayato who tried to accelerate in order to restrain him, as he was trying to stop Krovahn who gave a step forward with his feet.

– It's useless, Hayato. I know you have the feeling of wanting to stop him, but you won't make it in time.

Certainly, it's as Emile says.

Krovahn has already approached the dragonfly type and he's 10 meters away from it.

– Here I come!

Employing *energy*, Krovahn jumped higher than the dragonfly type and struck the *shelter* of the head with the twin blade that he raised overhead.

However, the blade stops at about 20 centimeters just before touching the *shelter* of the dragonfly type.

– What...? What the hell does this mean? Hey...!

Being amazed, Krovahn mutters.

– What the... this... my *Orthros Liberio* doesn't touch it...

Krovahn slashes the *shelter* two, three times in succession, but the result is the same.

– No way, is that a wide area *barrier* zone desuno!?

– ... it looks like that's the case.

Erika agreed to what Claire said.

Also, in the eyes of Hayato, a spherical membrane that covers the giant dragonfly is in sight.

It's similar to what Sakura deployed to save the bus passengers from the bombardment of a Savage in the Zwei Islands.

– When generating a *barrier*, the body's fluorescent color portion emits light intensively. In other words, that may be a barrier generator apparatus.

Surely as Erika says, a part of the body of the Savage is emitting a strong light.

– But, given that we know that, there's no other way but to smash the *barrier*.

That's certainly as Emile says.

Moreover, the dragonfly type enters in a bombarding stance and opens its head to eliminate Krovahn who's trying to start an offensive against itself.

– Krovahn, run away!

Nesat raises a grieving voice.

But that shout was in vain, the bombardment of the Savage hits Krovahn directly.

His vital was completely consumed with that.

Krovahn falls to the ground from his head.

Just like drawing a straight line with a ruler.

– Krovahn!

Panicking, Nesat rushes over his point of fall and catches the body of Krovahn in her arms.

– Krovahn, are you okay!? Are you alive!?

– ... y-yeah...

Asked by her older sister, Krovahn raised a groaning and painful-like voice and opened his eyelids.

His eyes lost the golden brilliance and returned to black.

– I'm relieved, you are alive...

Drops of tears can be seen at the edge of the eyes of Nesat who took a breath feeling relieved.

– Nee-chan. I, to that guy...

Krovahn gazes at the dragonfly type that floats in the sky and makes a vexed facial expression.

– It's enough, don't worry about that and rest... Krovahn, leave the rest to the others!

– But, if that happens, then— —

– Hey you two, watch out!

Nesat is taken aback by the shout of Emile.

It's because she noticed that the dragonfly type was coming down to attack with the sharp talons of its arms.

– ... kkuh!

Nesat tries to dodge the attack by kicking the ground and leaping horizontally.

However, as she was holding Krovahn in her arms, she started to move late.

– Kuuh... uuuh.... !

The talon of the arm of the Savage scratches the shoulder of Nesat, she crumbled down injured on the ground, she collapsed trying to cover Krovahn, she was gasping in agony.

The dragonfly type tries to attack again with its talons.

– We have to save them, Hayato!

– Alright!

Nodding together while looking at each other's eyes, both Hayato and Emile accelerated simultaneously using *energy*.

And then, they both are saved from the attack of the dragonfly type because Hayato carried Krovahn and Emile carried Nesat.

– Phew, we saved them.

Emile took a breath of relief as she lowered Nesat from her shoulder.

– It seems that the wound isn't that awful.



It appears that she was barely scratched, and the wound that is in sight is around 10 centimeters.

– Why you guys, to us...?

Asks Krovahn.

Hayato answered with a gentle smile.

– I told you, isn't it? We are aiming for a world where nobody gets hurt. You guys are no longer our enemies. Our enemy is that Savage.

– Don't you think so too, prez?

Claire nods to the question of Emile.

– Besides, we will be in trouble if you die desu. There are a lot of things that we want to ask.

– If so, there's one thing I want to request...

Krovahn moved on the shoulder of Hayato.

Although he groaned with pain, he continues his words.

– ... I don't care what happens to me. But, absolutely protect Nee-chan and Nakri...

– Krovahn...!

Hayato decided to leave Krovahn who fainted on his shoulder to Nesat. She tightly holds Krovahn that was handed over from the shoulder of Hayato in her arms.

Claire showed a gently smile while looking at them, but she immediately turned her eyes to the dragonfly type,

– Kisaragi Hayato, Emile Crossford, as it was told just now, we are going to take care of that masuwayo. Erika and Claudia Lowetti will protect and give treatment to everyone who have collapsed masu.

– Even if we do it, what are we going to do about that barrier? Unless we do something about it, we can't attack it.

– I am going to penetrate it masuwa. After that, you two will destroy the core.

Claire combines the six floating batteries and creates a huge rifle.

– Understood. That being the case, I'll go with this.

Using *Arms Shroud*, Emile created a rapier-like sword.

– Hayato will destroy the *shelter*. I'll stab and destroy the core with this afterwards.

Hayato nods.

– Well then, let's go masuwayo!

It seems that the loading of *energy* into the rifle held by Claire in her armpit ended.

From the muzzle that shines green, a beam of thick *energy* is fired.

However, she couldn't shoot through the wide area *barrier* zone.

– ... it seems to be a stronger barrier than I thought desuwane.

Suspending from the cheek of Claire to the nape of her neck, a drop of sweat dripped.

– But, if I inject energy again...!

– Please stop, Claire-sama!

Erika shouted when Claire tried to inject even more *energy* into the rifle.

The reason is that the dragonfly type changed the direction of its body and opened its head focusing on Hayato and co. who are in front of it.

– Everyone, deploy a barrier right now!

Claire shouts while returning the rifle to the six floating batteries.

However, the bombardment was never fired.

Because many beams were continuously fired from the distance towards the dragonfly type.

– Those are...

– Looks like those are the Slayers that are in other places and started an attack, huh?

Erika replies to Hayato.

Although the number of bombardments is high, they are thinner than the one that Claire fired, so their power is weak.

Naturally, they are prevented by all the barriers.

But, thanks to that, Hayato and the others were saved.

But that only changed the objective of the Savage.

The dragonfly type does a change of course again and attacked towards the direction it just attacked moments ago.

A roaring sound of an explosion.

Subsequently, the forest blazes in bright red.

– Kuh... It would be great if the Slayers over there are safe...

– Prez, at any rate, this is our chance.

Emile said so, following Claire who muttered while looking worried. When she noticed, the rapier in her hand was transforming into a huge rifle.

– I'll help this time too. If it's a full bombardment with two people, we might be able to destroy that barrier.

– At the same time——

Hearing those words, Erika opened her eyes wide in surprise.

– That's it, there's that way! Claire-sama, thanks to Emile Crossford, I came up with a good idea!

– What is it so suddenly, Erika?

– It's said that three people are better than two people and that four people are better than three people, correct?

Erika continues with an excited voice.

– Why don't all the Slayers who can do long range attacks in this place start an offensive on that Savage? In that case, I think that the possibility of destroying the wide area *barrier* is quite high.

– However, if another person among us could bombard, only one more——

Claire sees Nesat. She might be able to duplicate the battery created by Claire and bombard it.

No, that's not it, Claire-sama. When I say this place, I mean the Slayers who are in this mountain now, and everyone who can bombard it.

Being told so by Erika, Claire was surprised.

– ... ah, you were referring to that desuno!

– Were you able to understand it, Claire-sama?

– Yes.

Nodding, Claire immediately turned her eyes to Nesat.

– You are the ones who are jamming this place, correct desuwane? Where is the jamming device desu?

– ...

Regarding the question of Claire, Nesat didn't reply immediately.

Closing tightly her motionless mouth like a straight line, she hung her head with a troubled-like expression.

– If that device is destroyed, that Savage can be defeated. I wonder if you can tell us, please?

When Claire asked again, Nesat glanced at the collapsed Krovahn in her arms and,

– ... I understand.

She nodded. And she points out the top of a mountain of an altitude of 2,000 m, which is slightly higher than this place with her finger.

– The jamming device is over there.

There's a distance of around 5 kilometers by tracing a straight line from this place to there.

– It will take a lot of time till we get there and destroy it desuwane...

– I'll give it a try.

Emile creates a bow using *Arms Shroud*.

– Wait, are you planning to aim and shoot at that desuno?

– If I can do so, that'd be the best, don't you think?

Answering, Emile created an arrow in her right hand and decided to aim at the peak of the mountain pointed out by Nesat with a sighting device attached to the bow.

– How is it? You really think you will be able to manage it somehow or another?

– I'm sorry, Hayato. I'm concentrating right now, so I need a little bit of silence.

– Ah, sorry...

*BIP*, the sighting device makes a sound.

– ... objective confirmed! Here I go!

Emile shot the arrow that was tucked in bluish-white *energy*. It pushes its way towards the top of the mountain while cutting off the air.

A few seconds later, a small explosion occurred at the top of the mountain.

– Nice!

Emile raises a bright voice.

Apparently, she was able to destroy the jamming device.

The vital ring makes *BIP BIP*.

It's an emergency call from the base camp.

– As expected of Emilia-sama!

Claudia shouts.

Emile smiles with satisfaction, turning her line of sight towards Hayato.

– I did it, Hayato.

– I thought that if it was you, then you could do it.

– Ehehe...

Emile is happy and does a V sign with her fingers to Hayato who's praising

her.

Meanwhile, Erika started getting in touch with Shuemei who's in the base camp right away.

– Can you hear me, Ryu Shuemei? Right now, the line has been restored. Please tell us about the status of all the units at the present time and the number of Slayers that can fight.

[Ah, yes, just a minute please...]

After ten seconds of silence, Shuemei starts reporting.

[I accessed the latest data and I confirmed it. A team was completely annihilated with the attack done by the hunters. A team was completely annihilated by the bombardment of a mysterious Savage. The rest has suffered many injuries. Currently, there are 22 Slayers who are able to fight]

– Among them, how many people can bombard with beams?

[Please wait a moment.... ... umm, 12 of them]

– Understood. I will switch the line to Little Garden from here on. Please send the current information to the Strategic Analysis Room.

[Acknowledged. I will transmit it immediately]

*Haaa*, Erika takes a breath by disconnecting the line with the base camp. However, there's no time to rest.

Erika immediately connected the line to Little Garden.

– Can you hear me? This is the Little Garden Student Council Vice President, Erika Candle.

[We hear you, Erika-san. This is Chris Steinbelt, main analyst of Little Garden. The most important is that Claire-sama and everyone are safe]

– But Liddy has been injured. Anyway, are you receiving data from the operation HQ?

[Yes, Dr. Charlotte is calculating it using《LiZA》]

– Is that so...

She can hear the voice of Charlotte as she is.

[You hear me, Erika? The analysis result came now, but it's pretty tough. That wide area *barrier* zone seems to be very powerful]

– Charo, there's no way to destroy it?

Emile's the one who inquired.

[There's one. 《LiZA》also recommends it, but I'm not too fan of suggesting it]

– What do you mean?

[To hand out the ability of the Variant of Kisaragi Hayato to Claire Harvey. That's the answer that 《LiZA》submitted]

– Eh...

Emile was at a loss for words.

Hayato and everyone are the same.

– Wait a moment, that means, no way...

[Yeah, that means that Kisaragi Hayato and Claire Harvey have to kiss]

– That's a huge NO, Charo! Don't you understand what that means!? Why does it have to be something like that!?

[It's a simple story, Emile Crossford. In this, it's now possible to bombard it with optical weapons, and the only one that it's not infected by the Varian Virus is Claire Harvey. And regarding that barrier, the nature of the *energy* of Claire is compatible]

However, as she had to resurrect the six floating batteries that were destroyed, the amount of the *energy* of Claire has decreased considerably.

Therefore, Charlotte wants to say that they should kiss to increase it.

– But that doesn't mean that there won't be an unusual change in the body of the prez!

– Dr. Charlotte, what are you talking about? What you mean is that he's going to pour the Variant Virus into my body desuno?

[Exactly, Claire]

– Claire-sama, that's....

– Yeah, it's dangerous!

It's Emile who shouted after Erika who shows confusion.

– It's absolutely no good to pour the Variant Virus into an ordinary human being!

– Emilia-sama, what's that "Variant Virus"?

Claudia speaks in suspicion, as she felt that she was being left behind.

She doesn't know about the Variant.

– By any chance, does that "Variant Virus" have anything to do with the three hunters and Kisaragi Hayato and that their eyes were shining with a golden color? On that subject, at that time too, when I had the duel with Kisaragi Hayato—

– Sorry, Claudia. I'll talk about that story again later. We have to apologize for the fight with Hayato.

– ... in the end, *that* was... oh, I understand. If Emilia-sama says that sort of thing, then I will have to back down here.

[... so, what do you think, Claire?]

– I have been thinking about it, and there is no choice but to do it, even if there is danger masuwa. Especially if《LiZA》recommends it desu.

Claire replies to the voice of Charlotte that was audible from the vital ring.

[In short, you are saying that you are prepared, right?]

– I have just said so masuwa.

– Nevertheless, I'm against it after all. There's no guarantee that the barrier can be completely destroyed.

– Emile Crossford, if you are opposing because of emotional issues, then I don't have ears to listen to it masenwa. We have no choice but to try it now desu. Because the top priority is to defeat that Savage desu.

– That's, well, but...



[That depends on your determination. What are you going to do, Kisaragi Hayato-kun?]

– Before that, please wait a moment, Dr. Charlotte...

[... what is it?]

– Will that really increase the power of the *energy* of the President? This was something I heard from Emile before, but when kissing, it was rather a story that the activated virus would be contained within so...

[That's because you and her are Variants]

– Oh, I see...

In other words, if the other person isn't a Variant, the story is different. And it seems that the effects will be different.

[Looks like that solved your question. Then, I'll ask again. Kisaragi Hayato, do you want to kiss with Claire Harvey?]

*No way!* He guessed that this is not the situation to say that.

While bewildered, Hayato looks at Claire's face. He's so conscious of it that his gaze is attracted to her mouth.

Then, the lips of Claire moved.

– ... Ki-Kisaragi Hayato, you don't want to k-kiss me, is that it desuka?

– No, that's not what I meant to say...

– If so, well...

Claire turns her face away as it turns red and mumbles.

– I-if you aren't going to do it, then I-I will do it masuwayo.

[Hayato-kun, are you okay with the fact that a woman has to say such a thing?]

– That's, well...

He knows that it's not good.

But...

[There's no time. Do it quickly. By the way, it's no good if you only touch your lips. It won't have an effect unless you interchange saliva by entwining your tongues and piling up your lips for at least 10 seconds]

Looking like she's enjoying it, Charlotte incites them.

Emile had a face as if she had swallowed a bitter bug, but she didn't stop her.

The situation is a situation, there's nothing she can't do about the circumstances.

– If you do it, do it fast.

Emile says, looking like she became sulky.

Hayato put a hand on the trembling shoulder of the president in such a way that it pushes her back with the voice.

– I'm sorry, president.

– You don't have to apologize masenwa... as this is not our f-first time.

Certainly, it's like that.

The day after he fought the Savage for the first time, Claire came to the room when Emile was in the room of Hayato in the form of Emilia, a quarrel occurred there, and although it was like an accident, they kissed.

– ... don't tell me that you forgot about it mashitano!? For me that... was... my first time...

– No, there's no way I could forget about it! But, at that time, our lips slightly touched...

– ... a-anyway, if we are going to do it, let's do it quickly. It's a waste of time if we keep doing this desuwayo. Besides, it's embarrassing desu...!

– Ah, yes... I'm sorry...

The president closes her eyes.

Hayato also closes his eyes, and put his lips on top of hers——

(What is this, this feeling...?)

Touching each other, and in the space between lips and lips, long breaths of

the two act violently.

While a sound is resounding inside her head, a hot thing flows into her body through the throat.

(This is, Kisaragi Hayato's.... Variant Virus...)

Her head goes blank.

But, she's feeling that her power is kind of overflowing...



(... Liza.... It might be for a moment, but I will be like you, Hayato and Emile

Crossford, a Variant——)

Claire finally regains herself and takes distance from Hayato.

The voice of Charlotte was heard there.

[How is it? Are you feeling any change?]

– Eh, ah... well.... Somehow, I feel that strength is overflowing from the bottom of my body masuwa...

While she pressed down the lips with her hand, Claire said while showing a bewildered appearance.

[Alright, let's resume our strategy]

– Desuwane, we have to do something about that and fast——

While Hayato and co. are discussing, the dragonfly type attacks over and over again with its talons and bombardments towards the Slayers of the other teams.

– Erika, open a line of simultaneous transmission please. To the base camp, to the Slayers in this place, to all members desuwa.

– Yes, I opened the line now!

– Can you hear me, Slayers participating in the operation of the UN Peacekeeping Forces? This is Claire Harvey of Little Garden desu.

Saying plainly, Claire began to talk about the main issue.

– I think you are already aware of the existence of a new kind of Savage that looks like a dragon masu. As you can see, it possesses a very powerful wide area *barrier* zone masuwa. We attempted to bombard it as well, but we couldn't destroy the barrier. That's the same for everyone, am I correct? Because of that, Little Garden tried to analyze the barrier. As a result, if all the Slayers capable of bombard in this place attempt to bombard it at the same time with all your strength, it is very probable that we can destroy that barrier desu.

When Claire finishes saying so,

[Really?]

[Will that move work?]

And similar voices came back.

At the same time, not only different opinions, but also objections and other views are heard.

[Will Little Garden take responsibility in case of failure?]

That's something called "lack of nerve",

[In case we can defeat the Savage, as a result of the strategy, will Little Garden take hold of the war results?]

And also, things related to the distribution of the rewards.

– Claire-sama, what should we do?

– Little Garden will take responsibility masuwa.

Being firmly, Claire replied immediately.

– Besides, there is no need to worry about the rewards. Since many forces are participating in the simultaneous attack, the military gains are also distributed. This is not the achievement of Little Garden only masenwa. In the first place, this shouldn't be the place to be arguing about such a thing, don't you think!?

There were no objections to those words.

What came back were,

[Understood]

[I agree]

[Then, with the signal of bombardment from Little Garden]

And things like that were said.

– Commander, the permission of the participants was obtained. May we execute the operation?

[... We will leave it to Warslan, no, to Little Garden. The defeat of the unknown Savage is our top priority]

– Thank you very much masuwa. I give you my gratitude for your consideration masu.

With that, it's possible to execute the operation.

– When prez said “we will take responsibility”; you were somewhat cool.

That’s what Emile said.

– What are you saying desuno? We absolutely have to destroy that barrier. If you believe so and don’t shoot at it, then the barrier that can be destroyed won’t be destroyed masenwa!

– I don’t dislike that kind of Prez.

– Please tell me that you will do it obediently.

Emile injects *energy* into the rifle she held in her arm.

Likewise, Claire also began to inject *energy* into the rifle that was pointing towards the dragonfly.

– I already finished my preparations, but what about everyone?

– I don’t have any problems masenwa.

[Preparations ready]

[No problems here]

[I’m sorry about yesterday. I will shoot one more time. I’m waiting for your signal, President-san of Little Garden]

Such voices are coming back.

There’s not a single thing like waiting for someone who’s not ready.

– I don’t have a problem either.

Subsequently, it was Nesat, one of the three hunters, who said so. They thought that she duplicated the Hundred of Claire. She’s holding a similar rifle in her hands.

– Well then, let’s go masuwayo, you two.

– With zenryoku, zenkai, furupawa———\*

**\*TN: Three different ways of saying “full power”**

Following Claire, Emile shouted and Nesat nodded.

The tip of the three rifles standing side by side shines much more violently due to the color of each *sense energy*.

– Here I go masuwayo!

– ... Commencing bombardment....

– Here I coooooooooooooooooome!

At the same time, the voices of Claire, Nesat and Emile came out one after another and 3 thick beams struck the wide area barrier zone of the dragonfly type.

Similarly, a total of seven bombardments are released from other 4 places.

– It didn't work...?

Hayato muttered while looking up at the sky.

A total of ten beams attacks hit the barrier, but they haven't destroyed it yet.

– Unfortunately, looks like we are lacking output.

Erika mutters.

[It looks like there are more people who are injured than what we calculated and haven't been able to bombard it. At that point in time《LiZA》had estimated that there were 12 optic weapons that can bombard]

– In that case, if it's our share, we just have to increase the output, isn't it!? The prez can still do it, right!?

– Of course desuwa! Everyone, we will be counting on you masu! Let's decide the victory right away with this!

– ... I will do it, too.

Nesat's eyes shone with a golden color.

Similarly, the eyes of Claire also shine with a golden color.

Emile too.

– Here I goooooooooooooo———!!

The three beams become thicker, coiling like a whirlpool.



Finally, a violent explosion occurred around the dragonfly type.

– Wide area *barrier* ruptures, damage confirmed!

At the same time, Claire returned the rifle to the six floating batteries and immediately fired towards the generating apparatus of the wide area *barrier* on the body of the dragonfly type.

With the beams emitted from them, the barrier generator apparatus is destroyed.

– Now, Hayato!

– Give it the final blow!

Hayato received on his back the voices of Emile and Claire and jumped using the strength of *energy* and soars higher than the dragonfly type.

(This is a chance that everyone made it, I have to decide it here...!)

Loading *energy* into *Hien* that is in his hand, the blade shines red and the *aura* rises up like a flame.

Of course, he's aiming at the *shelter* of the dragonfly type.

– Uoooooooooooo— — — —!

Hitting the *shelter* with *Hien*, he knocks down to the lake its whole body.

However, that didn't end there.

The core hasn't been destroyed yet.

– Hayato, gooooooooo!

– Got it!

Shouting, Hayato immediately directed towards the core of the falling dragonfly the pointed end of *Hien* and accelerates in the air, he penetrated the head and the core like a meteor, becoming like a lump of *sense energy*.

A gigantic water column rises on the lake, along with a shriek.

Fluorescent color liquid begins to spread on the lake surface.

– Hayato!

– Are you alright desuno!?

Emile, Claire and Claudia rushed to the shore.

However, Hayato doesn't come up to the surface of the lake.

– Hayato...

Emile was fixedly staring at the lake surface and couldn't wait anymore, she jumped into the lake.

– Emilia-sama!

When Claudia shouted, Emile was diving deep into the lake.

– ——Hayato, Hayato... where are you!?

A voice barely reaches his ears.

No, not in his hears. A voice was echoing in his head.

(Here...)

A vague view. Hayato isn't in a full armament state anymore. On the contrary, the armament was cancelled, he returned to the state of only having his Variable Suit.

– ——Hayato, you were there!

A voice resounded in his head again.

It's the voice of Emile.

Immediately visible, the figure of a person similar to Emile was reflected.

Still, his visibility is vague, and he's being shaken by the movement of the waves.

(Right, I'm in the lake...)

Hayato realized that he was grasping something in his right hand.

(This is)

It's the dedicated Hundred of Hayato.

While becoming aware of it, he recalled the current situation.

A mysterious Savage, the fight with the dragonfly type and that he destroyed

the core inside the lake.

After that, apparently, he ended up losing consciousness.

— — — Hayato — — !

He heard the voice of Emile again.

The feeling of the fingertips touching his body.

And the feeling that lips and lips are touching.

The tongue of Emile invades the inside of his mouth.

(... why am I kissing Emile...?)

Along with the sensation of kissing, Hayato's consciousness dyes pure white

— —

# Epilogue

WL-03, a tilt rotor-type personal airplane, picked up all the members who had to sortie for the operation mobilization from Little Garden and flew away from Qin Empire.

It's to return to Little Garden.

Although they were able to slaughter most of the Savages hanging around Mt. Kongur and Mt. Kunlun in this operation of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, they weren't done yet.

Because the《Operation: Bird in Cage》was canceled due to the huge damage caused by the appearance of a dragonfly type which was an unidentified flying type of Savage, and because they didn't expect the attack of the hunters.

There were 32 injured people, some of them were severely wounded.

It's pretty much a miracle that given those numbers, nobody died.

Little Garden also ended up coming with 3 severely injured people: Fritz, Latia and Liddy.

Kisaragi Hayato who delivered the coup de grace to the dragonfly type Savage wasn't exempted from the situation that wasn't predicted.

He lost consciousness and is currently in a comatose state.

It was probably due to the burden that his body took by using excessively the ability of the Variant.

It's been over half a day since that battle and even now, he hasn't woken up yet.

What has been reaching the location of Claire who's in the drawing room of the personal airplane is information that tells that sometimes he has been having nightmares.

– Claire-sama, I brought a cup of black tea.

When Erika opens the door of the drawing room, the stern expression of

Claire who had been looking at the tablet-type computer while sorting the information, that expression became softer.

– Thank you very much masuwa.

She tastes the cup placed in front of her eyes and an aroma similar to fruity green apple flowed into her nasal cavity.

It's chamomile tea which has the effect to calm the mood.

Taking a breather, Claire resumes sorting the situation.

– Erika, what is the condition of that boy masuno?

That boy, Krovahn, is the boy who's a hunter. Certainly, those three hunters are not included in the number of injured people of not long ago.

– He remains in a comatose state like Kisaragi Hayato. Even though they have been injected to calm down the Variant Virus, the condition where their lives are in danger continues.

– ... I see desuno. How about the other two desuka?

– They are arrested in the warehouse and handcuffs have been placed on their hands which are resistant to the attacks that use *energy* and were injected to destroy the balance of *sense* energy in their bodies. There is no place other than that.

– Understood desuwa.

Judging from the situation, the two girls want to be on the side of the bed of the boy.

But, they cannot afford to do that.

It's fine if it's the girl who said her name is Nakri since her Hundred was confiscated, but the other girl, Nesat, seems to have the Hundred implanted as an artificial eye, it was said that it's difficult to remove it.

Moreover, this is the sky—she thinks that it's pitiable because supposing she could act violently, the lives of everyone will be affected, so it can't be helped.

– Claire-sama, is it fine if I say something?

– What is it?

– To be honest, I don't understand the thinking of Judal-sama. I believe that we, protecting the three people, will expose Little Garden to danger.

– I think so too masuwa. However— —

Claire bites her lips.

A transport helicopter appeared over the sky after Emile Crossford rescued Kisaragi Hayato who fell into the lake and finished off the dragonfly.

5 ordinary soldiers of Warslan army that were standing by at the base camp came down and scrambled from there.

Claire thought that maybe they came to rescue the collapsed Slayers, but they first began capturing the three hunters.

– What are you are planning to do nanodesu? Is this an order from the UN Peacekeeping Forces desuno?

Claire is knitting her brows as she asks so. They said that this is an action of a member of the UN Supreme Council, it's an order of Judal, the company president of Warslan Company, he told them that they were ordered to take the three people, together with Claire and everyone back to Little Garden in a personal airplane.

– What kind of thing is Judal-sama thinking about? I think that he's trying to lure Vitaly using the gang of three...

– ... I'm not sure masenwa. However, it is certain that it is the safest to protect them in Little Garden which is a floating city nanodesu. Because it's impossible to invade from outside easily, as well as for the three of them to escape.

– The problem is the founding festival in autumn, I guess? This year will be held at the west coast of Sentries port.

At the founding festival, and like they did when they docked in the Zwei Islands, they will invite in the residents of Liberia into Little Garden.

In order to release the three who were captured as prisoners and are inside of it, the assassins that Vitaly will send out won't necessarily be mixed with them.

– It would be nice if we could locate the whereabouts of Vitaly till then and capture her.

– ... the matter of the mysterious Savage and now this, our future is full of problems desuwane.

– I agree, why on earth was that thing there?

– It seems that further analysis will be done regarding that Savage after this desu. There is a chance that there are still Savages and *Variable Stones* in the area of Mt. Kongur and Mt. Kunlun, so it is possible that we have to sortie again masenwane.



Kisaragi Hayato, who ran out of *sense energy* in the battle against the dragonfly type, was transported to the hospital immediately after he returned to Little Garden in the personal airplane and it had been arranged so that he would undergo an examination by Charlotte. After that, Kisaragi Hayato was sent to the hospital where his little sister Karen was hospitalized, but he still sleeps in a single room without awakening. It has already been a day and a half since he lost consciousness.

The time of Little Garden is before 6 PM. It's the period of time when a madder red sky can be seen from the gap of the swaying curtains.

When Charlotte Dimandius was replacing the intravenous drip at the bedside of Hayato, the door of the hospital room opened with a sudden noise.

– Charo, what's the state of Hayato!?

Emile Crossford finished all kind of duties and inspections after she arrived in Little Garden and entered the hospital room.

– Not everything is bad, there are almost no abnormalities aside from the decline in the functions of his body due to a significant decrease of *sense energy* and that he activated the Variant Virus. And some minor external wounds.

– I see...

Hearing the explanation of Charlotte, Emile showed a relieved expression.

– When will Hayato wake up?

– I don't know. If the Variant Virus stabilizes, then I guess he'll wake up.

– ... in other words, you are saying that it's my turn?

– Well, that's how it is. Rather than an injection to suppress the Variant Virus, he'll surely wake up faster if *that* had to be done by you who's already stabilized. So, I'll leave it to you. It's fine if you do as you please, if you take Kisaragi Hayato as you like.

Charlotte finished exchanging the intravenous drip and left the hospital room, saying so in order to tease her. Emile gets closer to the side of the bed and touches with her hand the sleeping face of Hayato.

– Even though you reached the point where you were able to control the ability of the Variant and *sense energy*, we made you do something outrageous.... I'm sorry, Hayato.

Emile moved her hands to trace the contour of his cheeks and piled her lips against the lips of Hayato while sticking out her tongue.

*Smooch, kiss.... tongues rolling, smooch.... kiss, kiss....* hmm... fuu....

Sounds of rough long breaths and saliva intertwine. The sounds of a tongue that sucks up reverberate in the hospital room where only two people are.

Emile pecked at Hayato's lips for about a minute, entangled their tongues and continued exchanging saliva.

– Hmm, fuu...

And when Emile separated her lips, the door of the hospital room opens, making a sound.

– Emile-....san...?

Oh no! ——thinking so while looking back, what is reflected in the eyes of Emile are the figures of Kisaragi Karen in a wheelchair who stares in wonder and Kirishima Sakura who's behind her and whose corners of the mouth are hanging...



– Hey you, right now, what were you...!!

– No, this... well... it's just that Hayato had rubbish in his eyes...

– Rubbish you say? Hayato's sleeping, isn't he!?

– Err, it's not that it was in it, but an insect that came in through the window was on his eye and...

– Then where's that insect, huh!?

Sakura spread her hands in a big way.

Like wanting to say that there's nothing at all in this room.

– Well, it flew away and went out just now. It's true!

– Err, to me, it looked like Emile-san and Nii-san were ki-kissing...

– I-I told you, that's impossible. There's no way that I'll be kissing Hayato!

– Yes, because you are fellow men, right?

– That's right, ahahahaha!

When Emile was unrolling an excuse while being confused, a groan sounded in the hospital room.

– Nii-san!

– Hayato!

Karen moves the wheelchair herself and approaches the side of the bed.

Following her, Sakura also approached the bed.

– Why are you guys here...?

While saying so, Hayato opened his eyelids and raised his body, blinking incessantly.

Page 322

And after he looked to his left and right, Hayato asked Emile who's wearing her uniform.

– Is this, Little Garden?

– Yep. After defeating the Savage that was like a dragon, Hayato fell into the

lake and lost consciousness.

– I see.... It seems that I did it again, huh....

– Nii-san, I'm always saying to you to not do unreasonable things...

– My bad, I really...

– No, don't apologize, Hayato, we are the ones who have to apologize for making Hayato do the unreasonable.

Emile is apologetic while saying so.

– But, I'm really glad because Nii-san woke up like this.

Next to Karen who shows a relieved look, Sakura knits the inner part of her eyebrows. It's there that Hayato notices that she's showing an unconvinced look on her face and asks.

– ... did something happen?

– Nope, nothing.

Although Sakura answered so, she continued pointing her line of sight mixed with doubt towards Emile.



In the space that exists in the forest a little away from the city, over 1,000 tombstones were lined up.

It's the cemetery founded by Warslan Company.

The Asgard cemetery.

In the inner part of it, there was a section encircled by a white fence, where a person, a man in a suit, stood.

He's tall and has a good physique.

He stares at the gravestone to which a rose is dedicated in front of his unmovable and lifeless eyes that are at the other side of the thin sunglasses.

Linis Harvey.

What is engraved on the gravestone is the name of the wife of Bill Harvey, the president of Little Garden.

– It's been a long time, chichi-ue.

**\*TN: A respectful way of saying father.**

It's been half a year since we met, isn't it? As usual, your appearance doesn't change. You look young for your age.

Saying so with sarcasm, it's Judal Harvey, his son and the company president of Little Garden, who spoke on the back of Bill.

He was wearing a red suit as always.

However, Bill doesn't turn around, he remains silent, and keeps staring at the gravestone without moving.

Without worrying about it, Judal continued his words.

– Despite today being the death anniversary of my mother, it doesn't seem that Claire may come. Looks like there are all sorts of problems with this year's founding festival.

While saying that, Judal put the bouquet of roses he was holding in his hand in front of the rose that was placed in front of the gravestone.

– How is the progress of the plan?

Bill opens his mouth for the first time.

It's a small voice, similar to a whisper.

– It's going well. Lunaltia Base will be completed in a couple of years. The awakening of Liza should be close too.

– To oppose against God. And, rebel\*. We must fight against him and win. To be able to decide the destiny.

**\*TN: Kanji used can mean: treason, treachery, mutiny, rebellion, insurrection.**

– Exactly.

– I will come back to see you again, Linis. My beloved woman.

Murmuring, Bill starts to walk.

While staring at his back, Judal said as if spitting out with a small voice.

– ... you cripple.

Changing places with Bill, a bobcat woman, his bodyguard, who wore the uniform of the Slayers of Warslan Company, comes along.

– Judal-sama, it's almost time to head to Sentries port.

– I know, Neveah.

Answering and turning around, Judal starts walking.

(It's not for my mother. And it's not for my father.... I am me. I only do what I ought to do for the sake of my purpose)

Judal has taken another step forward on the path to reach the God he himself desires.